

Webster

Young Folks In Homes



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SUGGESTIONS FOR LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES IN CHILD-CARING INSTITUTIONS



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Young Folks in Homes

Leisure-Time Activities in Child-Caring Institutions

Based upon material developed by
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Recreation Association.

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July 1957

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PREFACE

The Department is grateful to the National Recreation Association for permission to use its material, *Young Folks in Homes*, first published by the Association in 1942. The Department also wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the Children's Bureau, whose vision and funds have made this national edition of *Young Folks* possible. We in the Department are proud of the knowledge, skill, and talent of all who have contributed to putting together so useful and attractive a volume as this.

Let us hope that, through the experience and understanding of child welfare workers who use this book, its wisdom will, once again, be translated into countless happy hours for children in institutions everywhere in the United States.

RAYMOND W. HOUSTON
Commissioner

Albany, New York
July 1, 1957



INTRODUCTION

When it was first published fifteen years ago, *Young Folks in Homes* earned widespread acceptance. Even though it has been out of print for several years, demand for the book has continued.

In October 1955 the New York State Department of Social Welfare obtained permission from the National Recreation Association to revise and reproduce material from the book in mimeograph form and to distribute segments of it in monthly bulletins to child-caring institutions in the State. That project renewed interest in the subject among institutional staffs and created new demands for the material, especially requests for a printed volume that could be more conveniently used by such staffs.

The present edition is the response to those requests. Through the skillful editing of Miss Catherine Weldon, the original material has been brought in line with present-day concepts of institution programs for leisure-time activities and has otherwise been recast to emphasize the responsibility of all staff in developing a wide variety of interesting and well-balanced activities for children living in institutions.

We hope that this volume will be used frequently and effectively in the service of children. We believe it is a worthy successor to Miss Barnes' edition, which became something of a classic in its special field.

WINFORD OLIPHANT, *Director*
Bureau of Child Welfare

Albany, New York
July 1, 1957





CHAPTER I

WHY PLAY?

Joyous, spontaneous play is so characteristic of childhood that it is seldom necessary to argue that children should have the time and opportunity to play. Every parent and adult who works with children, or who observes them, knows that children *must* and *will* play. If the time and the facilities are not provided, children will find their own time and ways of playing—even if it is necessary to short-circuit the firmest adult regulations to do so.

The play of children is not just aimless dawdling in which they indulge for want of something better to do. Their play activities are the natural expression of their deepest impulses for growth. Through play a child grows in body, mind, and spirit. When he romps, and jumps, and climbs, or plays strenuous games, the child is developing muscular coordination and is acquiring physical skill. In team games and in group activities, where right conduct is essential, he learns the rules of social living—cooperation, fair play, and sportsmanship. When he

paints a picture, makes a boat, or plants a garden, he is obeying a deep-seated urge to create, to bring something into being with his own hands and his own imagination. If his participation in these play activities is *spontaneous* and *unforced*, he experiences those feelings of personal satisfaction and achievement which are the bases of real happiness and contentment.

It is important to remember that when a child is playing, his personality is having its freest expression. He acquires skills easily because he performs more wholeheartedly and with less reservation than when he is doing something in which he is not so deeply absorbed or so naturally interested. He learns good sportsmanship, not through abstract teaching, but by experiencing it in his relationship with other children.

IMPORTANCE OF PLAY IN INSTITUTIONS

The child in an institution has some special problems, and play is just as important in his daily living as it is in the life of the child in a family home. He does not have the same sense of security and the warm affection that accompany most normal family life. He cannot roam the neighborhood to find the friends who suit him best. His choice is fixed arbitrarily by circumstances and he must usually select his companions from among other children in the institution.

Many times, the circumstances which are responsible for his being in a child-caring home have left him emotionally unsettled and with a restricted play background. Quite commonly children in institutions are found to lack even the elementary knowledge of traditional play activities.

The problem of providing an adequate recreation program in an institution presents a real challenge. To meet this when funds are limited and staffs are already hard pressed, seems almost impossible. But the workers in institutions who have given play its proper place know that the value, to the children in their present and in their later life, and to the general morale of the institution, more than compensates for the work involved.

There is overwhelming evidence to show that when children are happy in their play, disciplinary problems in the institution are reduced to a minimum. The freedom and joy of spontaneous play go a long way toward offsetting the routine, restrictions, and monotony which are inevitable in group living. Chores, school work, and other duties are performed better, and order is more easily maintained.

Children and adults both need variety and change in their everyday living. If children find adventure, fun, and new experiences in their play, a spirit of good feeling and willing cooperation pervades the institution. Often a hobby or a play interest has proved to be the most effective means of reaching a sympathetic understanding with an unhappy or rebellious child whose difficulties, real or imagined, have hampered his adjustment at the institution.

The purpose of an institution is not solely to provide for a child's immediate needs. The child will some day return to the community. Anything which will develop his particular abilities, give him a sense of security, and make his adjustment to community life easier, is within the province of the institution program.

Vocational training and individual guidance, which many institutions provide, help prepare the child to earn his own way as an adult. But earning a livelihood is only a part of his life. He must also live in his leisure hours as an individual and as a member of a group. If he has learned how to get along with other children by playing with them on a free basis of give-and-take, if he has developed individual and social skills which make him a desirable companion, his return to the community will be made more comfortably.

It is because rich and varied play opportunities contribute so much to a child's present development and to his future contentment that a balanced recreation program has come to be accepted as an integral part of an institution's services, deserving of the same thought and careful planning as his food, his clothing, his schooling, and his religious training.

VALUE OF COMMUNITY CONTACTS

The rich resources of the community, so essential to happiness and development, should be made available even though special effort may be required. Whether or not a child is free to join the Scouts, use the public library, go to the neighborhood playground or to camp, depends to a large degree on the farsightedness of the administration. Increasingly boards and staffs, realizing the importance to the child of these community contacts, are encouraging and planning for them.

More and more, children are going out to school, to Sunday School and church, to summer camps, to friends' homes for dinner, to school parties and athletic events, to activities at the local Y or similar community centers. They are joining Scout troops to which other boys and girls from the community belong, rather than having their own troop

at the home. Institution children are using the public library, with their own individual cards. They are participating in the town Halloween parade like all the other "kids," and are doing their own Christmas shopping. They are attending the local theaters, making the school athletic teams, and participating in many other extracurricular school activities and community events—all of this as individuals rather than as one of a large group from the home. Children usually accept such opportunities as an expression of trust and like to show the adult they can live up to it.

It is through these experiences that they will make lasting friendships, will learn to be comfortable with other children, and will gain some idea of taking personal responsibility for their actions. Moreover, they will come to know their community so that when they leave the institution to live in a foster home or return to their own home, they will know where to go and what to do in their leisure time. They will not run back to the institution every spare minute, as so many boys and girls have done in the past because they were lost and frightened in the vastness and strangeness of the world outside.

The child who has always gone to the housemother to get a new pair of shoes or a blouse and whose only idea of a bank is in terms of an envelope marked with his name in the superintendent's office, may find his way around when he leaves the institution, but it is likely to be through the costly trial-and-error method. An essential part of his experience should be to find out how money is secured, how one buys a railroad ticket, how and where to get the best values in clothes and personal belongings, and what to do in case of illness, accident, or fire.

Shopping tours provide excellent training. Many institutions allow their children to go downtown in small groups, and individually when older, to make their own purchases. Suggestions are offered on places to go and things to buy but the selection is left to the child.

In small groups the children can go to such community facilities as a dairy, meatpacking house, post office, library, bank, city hall, department store, grocery store, fire house, city council meeting, and that old favorite—the zoo. Many other types of experiences will be available, according to the kind of business, industry, and cultural activities offered in different communities.

Small groups are better on these tours than large ones. Children can ask more questions and receive more explicit answers. Because their curiosity can be satisfied, they are less likely to be inattentive or unruly.

They are less conspicuous and are spared the embarrassment of being pointed out as "the orphans," as sometimes happens when institution children are taken on wholesale excursions.

In one institution boys and girls not only go to football games in small groups of six or eight with one adult leader, but the various groups sit in different parts of the stadium. The group might be any neighborhood "gang" brought by the father of one of the boys. Another school plans long trips to places of scenic and historic interest. Every department takes one trip each year to a different place. They have a very happy time, send postcards, buy souvenirs, and come home and tell the others about it. The next year each group makes a trip to another place about which they have had glowing accounts from those who visited there previously. The trips are something to look forward to and to discuss all year round.

ATTENDING PUBLIC PLAYGROUNDS

In many institutions children are encouraged to attend the local playgrounds. Association with other children, with the resulting broadening of experience and the opportunity for more varied play activities which such a plan offers, makes this highly desirable. If the distance is too great even for older children to go to the local playground every day, arrangements may sometimes be made with recreation departments for transportation to large municipal centers for athletic games, swimming, tournaments, festivals, and other special events.

If the institution plans to use the neighborhood playground, the institution staff should meet the playground leader or confer with the recreation department. This will provide an opportunity to determine the type of program the children will be participating in and whether attendance will be a constructive and enjoyable experience. The playground leader should understand that the institution children should be accepted and treated as individuals with no special privileges or requirements because of coming from an institution.

In some communities the recreation department furnishes summer leaders for the institution playground or includes children from the home in city-wide athletic leagues, festivals, pageants, and various types of tournaments. Not all recreation departments are in a position to make such a contribution, but most are glad to help in every way they can, and it would be well for institution officials to get in touch with local recreation departments to learn what assistance may be available.

Care should be taken not to depend entirely upon the community playground program for institution children. The institution staff will have to be prepared to plan with children who do not go to the playground at certain times; or for activities at the home or in the community when the weather is inclement. It is important that children in specialized institutions, or those who are unusually upset, have a good program of activities at the home until they have developed to the point where they can handle community contacts successfully.

TIME FOR PLAY

To find adequate time for play in a busy institution program, filled as it is with school work, chores, personal duties, and religious services, requires very careful planning. The exact amount of time a child needs for play is a disputed question. But it is generally agreed that a minimum of two and a half or three hours a day is essential for children from ten to sixteen years of age, and that younger children should have as much as four or five hours.

At least half of this time should be devoted to active, outdoor play. The rest may be spent indoors or out in quieter activities, such as reading, handwork, table games, music, or dramatic play. Part of the older child's playtime, either indoors or outdoors, should be spent in organized team games like volley ball or baseball, or in such group activities as handcraft, hobby club, or putting on a play. Each child should also have some part of the day alone or in activities of his own making. In an institution where opportunities for individual initiative are limited by circumstances, this time for free play is particularly important. It is one of the child's best channels for developing his capacity for independence and resourcefulness.

All activities within the institution should be coordinated with the school program or other community program in which the children participate. All may offer the same type of activity and it is important to avoid duplication or overemphasis in any one area. At the same time it can be very interesting and worth-while to take advantage of carry-over interest, and to offer the children opportunities to develop and expand activities opened up to them outside the institution.

During the school year great care must be taken that school assignments and home chores do not encroach on the child's minimum play hours. Because the values of a child's play are so much more intangible than the results of specific classroom work or assigned tasks, it is often a great temptation to cut into his playtime without feeling that the child

is being deprived of anything vital to his existence. But if the values of play are fully appreciated, his playtime will be protected as carefully as his hours for sleeping and eating and going to school.

The playtime of older boys and girls, in particular, must be rigidly safeguarded. Those who are capable and willing sometimes serve as leaders of the younger children's play activities. While there is no doubt that this service can provide a very good experience in cooperation and leadership, it should never be allowed to take the place of the older child's recreation. He is still entitled to time and opportunity for playing with children of his own age. Shortening his playtime is, in effect, penalizing him for his helpfulness.

TIME FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL

Some thought should be given to the hours that might be needed for extracurricular activities at school. A flexible schedule is particularly important if the child attends a community school. The glee club, the basketball team, the parties, rehearsals for special events, are all an important part of the child's school life. Frequently participation in these activities means that a child must remain after class or return in the evening or on Saturday. Although his attendance may necessitate an adjustment in the institution program, the social and cultural values of these activities usually justify whatever rearrangement of routine may be involved. If a rigid routine in the home prevents a child from participating in the after-school program, he is apt to be set apart as an "institution child."

"IN-BETWEEN" MINUTES FOR PLAY

In addition to the regularly scheduled play hours, there are in every day some very precious "in-between" minutes which can be filled with interesting play activities. These are the brief intervals before and after meals, bathing periods, and other times that are too short for any sustained activity. Such periods are often dull or tiresome to the children, and they get restless or prankish.

These "in-between" minutes cannot be filled with activities which require long concentration or attention, but the imaginative houseparent can make them pleasant for the children by providing for brief stories, songs, listening to music, looking at books or magazines, playing with puzzles, doing tricks, guessing games, and, best of all, just chatting about the exciting happenings of the day. One possibility is to have the chil-

dren congregate in a comfortable room before each meal. Here, after they have washed themselves in readiness for their meals, the children have a few minutes to visit with each other, to listen to the radio, and to enjoy the relaxation of a comfortable living room. The homelike atmosphere of the room has the effect of quieting the children so that their behavior during mealtime is calmer and more acceptable than it might be otherwise.

The smoothness and enjoyment of these "in-between" times depends to a great degree on the physical setup of the quarters used by the children. If facilities for eating, sleeping, playing, washing, and so forth are on different floors or in different buildings, there is more need to move and operate as a group. Some congregate institutions have used wonderful imagination in rearranging the living quarters to provide for more individual activity and movement by the children and easier and more casual supervision by the houseparents. This kind of arrangement has been called "unit" or apartment living and provides each group with space on one floor for dormitory, bathroom, and playroom. Most of these plans also provide for meals to be served in the unit, either in a section of the playroom or in a separate dining room within the unit. These units are so planned that a houseparent in any one room can know and probably see what is happening in any or all of the other rooms of the unit.

When the children live in these small integrated units they tend to develop a feeling of belonging and responsibility. Behavior problems are reduced because the children are able to move at their own pace and to engage in interesting activity as time allows. Mass movement and much waiting are eliminated.

These small group-living units in no way interfere with or minimize the use of general facilities such as a gym, auditorium, snack bar, special arts and crafts rooms, shops, and so forth.

HOLIDAYS, WEEKENDS, AND SUMMER VACATIONS

Holidays and weekends bring with them long hours for uninterrupted play. These are ideal occasions for extended hikes, excursions, trips to state parks, hobby clubs, and for putting on plays and musicales for which there may not be enough time on regular school days. As much as possible, these days should be the children's own. Occasionally they may have to visit a dentist or a physician, or do extra chores. But such intrusions on the days specifically set aside for play and relaxation should be limited as much as possible.

Unfortunately, in some institutions Saturday to the children is still only cleaning and mending day. Holidays all over the world are festive days which provide everyone with a much-needed change from the wear and tear of everyday tasks. In institutions there should be days for play and fun primarily.

The summer vacation affords the opportunity for a different and varied play program, balanced between activities that are organized and those that are entirely free; between physical and creative play; and between individual and group activities. During the school year it is necessary to limit the play program to activities which can be carried on without interfering with regular classes. The summer brings no such limitation. Vacation days are days for joyous play, first and foremost. There may be some special home chores to do, but they should never be so heavy that a child will not have all the time he needs for a richly balanced and satisfactory play life.

The interest, imagination, and enthusiasm of the houseparent are particularly important at holiday and vacation times, whether she has the responsibility for planning and carrying out program with the group or whether the activity is in the hands of special staff or volunteers.

The houseparent is primarily responsible for the well-being of her children. She should have an opportunity to know of and share in the planning for all activities that concern her group. She should know where the children are going, with whom, what they will need, what the time schedules are, and so forth. This will permit her, with the children, to prepare for these days and to be sure necessary chores and routines can be taken care of without pressure or undue disturbance.

If a holiday or Saturday has to be given over to special chores, it can be made a pleasant experience by enlisting the cooperation of the children in advance, by planning carefully, and perhaps by ending up with a special treat. This kind of day can be satisfying and enjoyable if all concerned catch the right spirit about it, and have some fun while getting things done.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

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How Children Grow and Develop. \$.40

How Children Play for Fun and Learning. \$.40

BOOKS

Konopka, Gisela, *Group Work in the Institution*. New York: William Morrow & Co., 425 4 Ave. 1954. \$3.25

Schulze, Susanne, *Creative Group Living in a Children's Institution*. New York: Association Press, 291 Broadway. 1951. \$5.00

PLANNING THE



CHAPTER II

PLANNING THE PROGRAM

In any consideration of leisure-time activities the importance of a balanced program should be stressed constantly.

The first step in planning, therefore, is to decide just what a balanced program is. Considered primarily from the point of view of its values to the child, such a program should include the following six types of activities:

PHYSICAL: Sports, apparatus play, active games.

CREATIVE: Handcraft, music, dramatics, art.

MENTAL: Study clubs, discussions, debates, guessing games.

SOCIAL: Parties, picnics, trips, visiting friends.

SERVICE: Leadership in Scout troops, sewing or collecting for groups in need, working for a service organization.

RELIGIOUS: Assisting in Sunday School. Church choir. Interest in missions.

An individual needs experience in these six spheres of activity for the development of a fully integrated personality. However, voluntary participation is of prime importance when the activity is part of the

leisure-time program. *Attendance* at Sunday School may be required as an important phase of the program for everyone, but *assisting* in Sunday School responsibilities should be undertaken because of interest and willingness on the part of an individual to give the extra time and put forth the additional effort. Service projects may be undertaken by a class in school with everyone expected to participate as a learning experience, but when these projects are a part of the out-of-school activities, participation should be on a voluntary basis.

Although one child may prefer music to sports, he should at least be familiar with athletic games and know their possibilities for fun and physical growth. Children who love dramatics should have the opportunity of developing their interest and their talents and should not be neglected for the larger number who like active games. A program which stresses any one type of activity is top-heavy. The only way of making sure that each child will have a really varied play experience and that all children will have their fair measure of play opportunities is to emphasize equally all these different types of activities in the recreation program. Exposing children to opportunities to participate is preferred to requiring children to enter all scheduled groups. Some children participate more readily and profitably after having had time to observe.

The variety of activities in any one or in all six of the given play divisions is infinite. Physical activities, for example, range all the way from the manipulation play of the infant, through the running and jumping games of boys and girls of school age, to the highly organized game of football for boys in their teens. In this wide range of activities it is natural that there should be some of more interest and value to certain groups or individuals than others. The following considerations will help the leader select activities and so conduct them that they will be of the greatest benefit to all participants:

1. *Emphasize participation rather than production.* It is more important that all children have adequate opportunities than that time, effort, and money be spent on developing a few "stars." Varsity teams have their place. So do representative bands and dramatic groups. But if their organization and training deprive the majority of children of a chance to be active, they do not warrant a place on the program. Of primary importance are the fun and fellowship enjoyed and the personality development entailed in the preparation of some project, not in the finesse of the final performance or product.

2. *Recognize individual interests.* There was a time when no child in an institution could take music lessons, join the Scouts, or attend camp unless every child could have the same advantages. Now, however, institution administrations are striving to provide every opportunity for children to develop as individuals. If all children know that provision will be made for each individual's need or interest, there will be no occasion for anyone to feel slighted if all do not participate in exactly the same way. One child's home conditions may be such that he can spend every weekend there. Another child may not be so fortunate, but the possession of a pet "of his very own" may help to compensate him. While one little girl enjoys her classes in tap dancing, another may be just as happy attending a story hour at the public library.

3. *Give fashions and seasons their proper place.* Institution children want to do, and should do, the things that other children in the community are doing. If there is a sudden interest in model airplanes, ballet dancing, "charm" clubs, or certain television programs, these should be on the institution program so that the children will have the feeling of keeping up-to-date. As for seasonal interests, marbles and baseball blossom forth in the spring just as surely as do the crocuses and violets. With winter come checkerboards and puzzles for indoor play, along with sleds and skates for outdoor use. It is important to remember these seasonal interests and fads and to plan accordingly. If they are ignored the program may break down.

4. *Adapt play activities to age interests and abilities.* At various stages of their development, children reveal characteristic play interests common to most children of the same age. These interests are determined partly by their physical, mental, and emotional growth, and partly by play tradition. Because of this similarity in the abilities and interests of the majority of children of the same age, it is possible to classify play activities according to the age for which they are best suited. Such a classification, if used advisedly, serves as a ready guide to the leader in selecting activities for children of different ages. One which may prove useful will be found in the next chapter.

A word of caution regarding this classification is necessary. It should be remembered that activities are grouped for convenience and are not meant to represent hard-and-fast age divisions. Children do not grow by spurts, nor do they hurdle abruptly from one stage of growth to the next. In all children there is a gradual maturing of interests and abilities. Consequently, there is a great deal of overlapping at all ages.

But if allowance is made for individual differences, the age classification as given can be made to serve as a real aid in planning a program for all ages.

5. *Recognize that many children coming into institutions apparently lack interest in play or the ability to participate.* There are many reasons for this, including little or no play experience, emotional upset, tension, and personality difficulties. This should be kept in mind when using any kind of classification chart and when setting up a program or schedule of activities.

6. *Give boys and girls the chance to play together and observe one another's activities.* Too often, in the past, boys played on one playground and girls on another. Boys and girls must live in a world of both men and women. Unless they learn as children how to get along together, easily and without self-consciousness, their later adjustment may be painful and at times tragic. Boys and girls at certain ages may prefer to separate for particular activities, but they should have the opportunity to be together.

SPECIAL PLAY PROBLEMS OF INSTITUTIONS

The foregoing considerations underlie the planning of good recreation programs everywhere. Institutions have, in addition, some special needs and problems which must be given consideration in the initial planning of the recreation program. These problems are two-fold: those which come from the limitations of the institution itself, and those which result from the particular play needs of institution children.

The child-caring home may be a cottage-plan type, with complete living units for small groups, or it may be a large, congregate building with schoolrooms, dormitories, playrooms, and dining halls all under one roof. Many of the latter now have the unit-living plan. The institution may be for boys, for girls, or for both. It may house thirty or three hundred. It may be in the city or on the outskirts of a small town. Its location, the nature of its population, and its living arrangements are all factors in determining the nature and content of the recreation program.

Although specific problems vary with the policy and architecture of the institution, there are certain general problems affecting the recreation program which are shared by most child-caring homes.

One general problem is funds. Only occasionally does one find an institution which has enough money to have all the facilities, supplies,

and leadership desired. The person responsible for planning the activities has to see that the institution has the very best program possible with the funds that are available. As administrators recognize and accept the importance of recreation and leisure time in the development of the children in their care, they are finding ways of raising and allocating funds for this part of the institution program. They are seeing the need to provide a regular budget for play materials and equipment, recognizing the necessity for frequent replacements and many expendables.

Another is the limitation of staff, either in numbers or in recreation experience or training. Several colleges now give degrees in recreation; and schools of social work are offering courses in group work, some giving special preparation for work in institutions. (See Chapter IX, Leadership.)

Staff relationships sometimes complicate the smooth functioning of the institution program. In large institutions particularly, with many workers of varying background, education, religion, and experience, difficulties can arise easily. Because these people must live and work so closely together, jealousies, disappointments, and differences of opinion are likely to occur. Adults who are emotionally torn are not apt to conduct a happy play program for children. If such difficulties are anticipated, much can be done to avoid them, or at least to lessen possible tension. Several institutions are now employing a program director, home-life supervisor, or supervisor of houseparents to give leadership and in-service training to staff. This helps considerably in building strong morale, minimizing differences, and coordinating assets.

To overcome limitations that may exist in facilities, space, and equipment, great imagination and ingenuity on the part of the staff is necessary. Some suggestions will be found in later chapters.

Varying periods of residence are typical of all institutions. The play program must, therefore, include features which will appeal to, and have definite value for, children who remain for only two weeks to three months. At the same time the program must provide for sustaining interest and for progress in development for those who are in the institution for up to three years.

PARTICULAR PLAY NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS

To offset the routine life in institutions, the play program should be set up with a view to diminishing any regimentation or over-systematizing which may have crept into the daily group living. This can be

done by promoting activities which will awaken initiative and by stimulating the dynamic expression of individual interests.

The attitudes the children build up toward routines, and the relationships they develop with staff and other children, influence their response to leisure-time activities.

The exchange of affection, the feeling of belonging, and the give-and-take which are inherent in family life are practically impossible to recapture in group living. However, some sense of importance, security, and feeling of responsibility can be fostered for many children by providing pets, personal belongings, and opportunities for individual achievement.

An interested and alert staff can find many clues for what is needed in the program by thoughtful observation of the children and by discussion with the children themselves.

Children from different cultural backgrounds and from communities or neighborhoods with unique play traditions can add a great deal to programs if permitted to share their experiences with the group.

The effects of artificial segregation of the sexes should be minimized. Although great strides have been made to bring about as normal a situation as possible, the fact still remains that in institutions there is a segregation which is distinctly different from that in the normal home.

Allowance for a diversity of mental accomplishment must frequently be made. In institutions there are bound to be a few children whose mental age is low, and others whose mental development has been so retarded because of the unfortunate circumstances of their lives that it does not correspond to their physical development. These children often find themselves grouped together in their dormitories, their dining rooms, and their playrooms. They are separated only in their school. Therefore, in planning a leisure-time program in such a situation, the leader must allow for a wide difference in mental ability.

There are certain play deficiencies and personality characteristics which institution children exhibit more frequently than other children. These sometimes cause great concern, especially to new leaders. If the underlying reasons for these problems are understood, much can be done to overcome them through a wisely planned and carefully administered program. Many children take out their resentment about being in the institution during the play hours because they feel freer to express their feelings. They do this in several ways, such as non-participation, aggressiveness, destructiveness, and interference.

Conducting a play program in an institution has many aspects that differ from those involved in conducting one in a settlement house or other community center. One of the major differences is the manner in which the children come to an activity. Their approach often lacks enthusiasm because it may be merely a choice among several activities, none of which appeal too much; it may be an escape from routine or boredom; it may be assigned; the youngster may much rather be doing something on his own; or there may be insufficient relief from the pressure of constant living in a group.

Many children when first admitted to institutions do not have even an elementary knowledge of the most common type of play activity. This may be due to lack of encouragement in the homes from which they come, because of shifting from one institution to another, or because of little previous opportunity to play.

Loyalty in team play is sometimes lacking. It must be remembered, however, that the grouping of children in institutions is usually arbitrary. They must be given time to develop respect for one another. Even though children eat at the same table and sleep in the same room they are not necessarily loyal to the group or the individuals in it.

Institution children seem to be more hungry for activity and more "intense" in their play than other children. A handcraft teacher who is planning to hold weekly classes introduces a project at the first session which should take three or four weeks to complete. She is amazed to find at the next meeting that the children have finished the project in a day or so and are anxiously awaiting the next project. Perhaps the feeling of insecurity springing from past experiences accounts for this desire of children in institutions to grasp all they can and to "gobble" it down before someone snatches it from them.

"Institution children are so destructive!" This complaint is heard from all sides and there are certainly numerous examples to support the statement. But then, picture fifty children living in constant proximity, having to share toys, and sometimes receiving little instruction on how to use or take care of their playthings. It is no wonder that they are more destructive than fifty other children who live in their own homes, who have their own toys, and who are part of an environment which gives them a definite sense of values. Children are naturally curious, but they are not naturally careful and appreciative. They must learn respect for property gradually and through everyday experiences. One of the best ways to help children with this is by providing for some possessions of their own to cherish and care for with appropriate

assistance. It helps to have toys and equipment carefully chosen and placed for age or interest groups and to have play areas and playrooms used by small groups. This gives children and staff more feeling of responsibility and satisfaction.

A successful play or leisure-time program in an institution depends upon the willingness and ability of the administration, recreation leaders, and houseparents to understand the difficulties and problems and to adjust any program or schedule of activities to the particular needs of their children.

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PAMPHLETS

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A GUIDE TO PLAY ACTIVITIES AT

DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS



CHAPTER III

A GUIDE TO PLAY ACTIVITIES AT DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS

This guide is set up with the idea that it may be helpful to anyone dealing with children at various age levels. However, it should be kept in mind that each child develops at his own pace and cannot be expected to fit into any one of the categories listed at any given time. This guide should be used only as a reference and should in no way serve as a measuring rod against which to compare a child or a group. There will be many overlappings. With institution children it probably will be found that they are a year or two behind in many skills or interests, and that they tend to cling to younger age level activities longer. However, most children carry over one or more early interests for years; for example, some girls enjoy dolls even through adulthood, and some boys never lose interest in block building.

Each child should be accepted at the play level at which he enters the group and should be helped on an individual basis to develop gradually from one phase to another without any upsetting comparisons with age level expectations. His development in the play program will follow and be determined by his adjustment in other phases of his life and personality.

If a houseparent or play leader finds that a child has consistent and marked deviations from the usual play interests of his age or develop-

ment level, these should be observed, recorded, and reported to the director, caseworker, or other appropriate staff member. It may be that such a marked difference indicates a serious personality disorder or severe emotional disturbance, which should be brought to the attention of the psychiatrist or guidance clinic.

AGE: BIRTH TO AGE FOUR

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: Play alone, with adults. Short interest span. Curiosity. Experiment with motor control, sensory experiences. Manipulation. Imitation. Interest in bright colors, varied sounds. Repetition. Dropping. Throwing.

ACTIVITIES: Pulling. Pushing. Carrying. Walking. Climbing. Tasting. Touching. Wandering. Creeping. Water play. Rhythmic motion (swinging, banging). Listen to music.

MATERIALS: Cuddly, washable toys. Rubber toys, dolls. Rattles. Sturdy, durable picture books. Color cones, rainbow rings. Blocks, pegs, spools (at least one inch in diameter). Nesting, "fitting" toys. Kitchen pots, pans, spoons. Sturdy basket. Paper to tear, rumple. Sand. Carts. Large rubber or lightweight beach balls. Play pen. Baby swing. Low slide. Kiddie Kar. Old cartons, boxes. Rocking, pull toys.

STORIES, MUSIC: Nursery rhymes (sung, said). Finger play (Peek-a-boo; This Little Pig Went to Market). Repetitive, rhythmic phrases (Mr. Bear). Pictures, stories about everyday activities (dressing, airplanes, grocery store).

AGE: FOUR TO SEVEN

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: Period of great physical activity, imitative and imaginative play. Play together but do not sustain long periods of group play. Children become aware of themselves as individuals. Self-assertive and quick to quarrel. Sense of ownership (drawer or shelf for each child).

ACTIVITIES: Running. Balancing. Rolling. Skipping. Jumping. Purposeful throwing. Simple ring games (Sally Water). Focused imitative, dramatic play (nurse, house, fireman). Desire to help adults (pick flowers, set table). Beginning of household arts (cooking, cleaning). Nature (plant seeds, watch birds). Pleasure trips to shore, farm, woods. Continue interest in blocks, pegs, more complex educational and "fitting" toys. Puzzles. Handcrafts—non-technical approach. Drawing, finger

painting, easel painting. Clay modeling. Weaving. Simple woodwork. Collecting, hoarding of buttons, shells, leaves. Messing, dabbling in water, dough. Soap bubbles. Singing. Dancing, rhythms. Rhythm band.

MATERIALS: Climbing ladder. Slide. Swings. Tricycle (sturdy and of proper size). Sand box, molds. Play house. Packing boxes. Kegs. Planks and wooden horses. Hoops. Tops. Bean bags. Hammer. Soft wood. Flat top nails. Short sturdy saw. Small but secure vise. Child-size gardening tools (rake, shovel). Dolls. Doll house, carriage. Toy furniture. Picture books. Pans for water. Soap bubble pipes. Aprons. Work table. Blunt scissors. Paste. Old magazines. Paper. Crayons. Paints, brushes, shellac. Easel. Clay boards, linoleum. Clay. Dough. Blackboard. Scrapbooks. Pictures for collection. Yarn. Cloth. String. Large needles. Thread. Ribbons. Large buttons. Beads. Scrap materials—boxes, cans, cartons of all types and sizes. Bottle tops. Berry baskets. Natural materials—nuts, twigs, fruit seeds. Household items—brooms, cookie cutters, strainers. Dress-up clothes—old hats, shoes, pocketbooks, costumes, adult finery.

STORIES, MUSIC: With four-year-olds and five-year-olds story interest runs high. Mother Goose. Stories about things with which child is familiar. Rhythmic and repetitive stories in which children join (Three Little Pigs).

Fanciful stories and folk stories may be introduced at about the sixth year. All of these age groups enjoy nursery songs and folk songs. Singing games (Looby Lou). Activity songs (Singing Time). Rhythm records. Imitate television, dancing, and singing commercials.

AGE: SEVEN TO TEN

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: “Know-it-all” age. Rivalry, noisiness, desire to be “tough.” Beginning of purposeful activity. Instead of aimless running and jumping, games are played. Girls love free, active games. Curiosity and questioning. Learning through informal conversation, books, and trips. Money sense (pocketbooks, toy banks).

ACTIVITIES: Games of chasing, hunting, throwing (cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek, drop the handkerchief, ring toss). More complex singing games (Farmer in the Dell). Personal skill games (hop scotch, jack-stones, marbles). Dolls. Seasonal games and activities (Halloween, Christmas). Beginning of educational games (see following age group).

Nature (pets, gardens, experiences on the farm). Handcraft—non-technical approach (see earlier age groups)—also carving, plaster casting, papier mache. Child makes things to use: boats, kites, insect cage, doll clothes, paper dolls, party favors, costumes, scenery, and signs. Also constructs things he is learning about (Indian village, park, or farm in the sand table). Making musical instruments. Dramatic play (impromptu shows, circus, parade). Short lived and loosely organized “clubs.”

MATERIALS: Jump ropes. Balls. Puzzles. Marbles. Roller skates. Wagons. Scooters. Stilts. Kites. Jackstones. Bean bag board. Ring toss. Jungle-gym. Playground apparatus. Dolls, doll furniture. Additional carpentry tools: sandpaper, hinges, screws, planks. Old machinery to take apart. Crafts materials: (see previous age group), also plaster of Paris, wood. Scrap materials. Sewing materials, inexpensive cloth. Paper. Pins. Poster paint, large (one-inch) paint brushes, poster paper. Penknives. Clips. Rubber bands. Notebooks for record of birds seen, copying poems, riddles. Miniature sailboats. Toy money. Chests for costumes. Table games (dominoes, parcheesi).

STORIES, MUSIC: Likes to read on own, but still enjoys listening to folk stories, fairy tales, Bible. Stories about adventure, nature, animals, the world we live in. Reference books. Listens to radio, watches television.

AGE: TEN TO THIRTEEN

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: Drift towards team sports. The gang age. Boys move in gangs under own leaders, girls in cliques. “Tomboy” age for girls. Boys and girls often prefer to part company, but play leader should foster some suitable co-recreational activities. Purposeful in planning and performing.

ACTIVITIES: Running, hunting, and ball games. Some team sports (three deep, prisoner’s base, dodge ball, baseball, box hockey). Makeshift games. Educational games (arithmetic, geography, history, reading, spelling). Quizzes, riddles, puzzles. Dramatics (informal). Nature (care of pets, trips, collections, museums). Camping out. Exploring. Swimming. Household arts (cooking, sewing). Group construction (snow forts, tree houses, bird-feeding stations, rabbit houses). Creative *skill* in handcrafts begins: (see previous age groups for crafts), add metalcrafts, bookbinding, printing, leathercraft, knitting, tie-dyeing, basketry, braiding, and hooking.

MATERIALS: Rings. Trapeze bars. Circle bars. Climbing rope. Equipment for baseball and other ball games. Quoits. Box hockey. Toboggans, sleds, skates. Puzzles, table games (checkers, monopoly). Scrap books. Stamps, stamp albums. Mechano. Letter-writing materials. Craft materials: (see previous age groups), also pewter, copper, tin. Materials for model-making. Tents. Rowboats. Gardening tools. Aquaria, insect nets. Equipment for care of pets.

STORIES, MUSIC: Hero tales (King Arthur, Robin Hood). Animal and nature stories. Humor, folk tales, well-written. Romantic stories of high quality. Standard authors, Kipling, Stevenson. Personal readings: action, adventure, mystery, history, science, reference books. Hobby literature. May have interest in individual piano or dancing lessons. Some group dancing and experimenting with various musical instruments.

AGE: THIRTEEN TO SIXTEEN

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: Awkward age. Team sports. From now on, boys and girls play separately in the rougher sports and in those which involve body contact. Suitable co-recreational sports (skating, shuffleboard) and other co-recreational activities enjoyed (trips, parties). Interest in clothes. Striving for independence but very dependent on acceptance by own crowd.

ACTIVITIES: Team games. Hurdles, broad jumping, vaulting, for boys. Individual and dual games (handball, deck tennis, badminton, table tennis, canoeing, golf). Dramatics (simple plays, pageants). Social activities (parties with musical mixers and social games; making party costumes; decorating). Club activities and skills (Scouts). Reading interest strong. Some creative writing (plays, stories, poems). Technical approach to crafts and hobbies. Crafts: (see previous age groups) also puppetry, model-making, printing, radio, dressmaking, photography, scientific experiments. Hero-worshipping age (keep scrapbooks of outstanding personalities). Carpentry (more finished product). Personal work projects (girl makes curtains for her room; boy makes a bookcase for his room). Group-work projects (decorating game room, building outdoor fireplace). Altruistic impulses develop (projects such as collecting toys for invalid children). Nature (hikes with camera, cooking out, woodcraft, map making). Trips.

MATERIALS: Equipment for tennis, badminton, tetherball, swimming, fishing, golf, archery, darts, table tennis. Bicycles. Skis. Equipment for hobbies (field glasses, microscope, loom, radio, camera, darkroom, sewing machines, printing press). More specialized carpentry tools. Scrap materials for making useful objects, home-made games. Models (airplanes, ships). Old motors. Outdoor cooking and camping outfits. Hobby magazines. Cook books. Typewriters. Electrical toys and trains. Pets. Musical instruments. Latest table games.

STORIES, MUSIC: Realistic, mystery, adventure. Personal reading: scientific, historical, biography, romantic, fashions, hobbies, reference. Movies. Television. Radio. Record player. Folk dancing. Chorus, band, orchestra.

AGE: SIXTEEN TO EIGHTEEN

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: Girls somewhat more mature than boys. Boy-girl interest. Lack of judgment combined with forward tendencies. Permanent cultural and hobby interests develop: athletics, nature, science, music, arts.

ACTIVITIES: Continuation of team sports, individual and dual games. Co-recreational parties, dramatics, puppetry, singing, dancing, sports. Interest in preparation for adult life (proper dress, manners, "charm"). Public speaking. Discussion groups. Attend lectures, sports events.

MATERIALS: See materials for preceding age groups.

STORIES, MUSIC: See data for preceding age groups. Social dancing. Concerts. Attending plays, operettas.

CO-RECREATION

Hobbies and activities generally popular with boys and girls around which groups might be organized include the following:

Cartoon drawing	Handcraft	Puppetry
Charm	Harmonica	Radio
Chemistry	Knitting	Social dancing
Cooking	Model planes	Stamps
Current events	Model ships	Tap dancing
Folk dancing	Nature	Tumbling
Glee club	Photography	Ukelele

These groups may be organized as clubs when there is sufficient interest and good leadership. Several of these interests lend themselves to co-recreation clubs and would bring the boys and girls together without too much self-consciousness. This might be especially important for adolescents who cannot have an opportunity to participate in community club activities.

It is important that boys and girls be permitted to be together and do things together so they can get to know, respect, and accept one another. A normal relationship between boys and girls, free from self-consciousness, is essential to social and psychological development. It is in the years before adolescence that boys and girls learn to accept one another most easily, and institutions should provide for them to be together as much as possible, particularly for leisure-time activities. When they have had the experience of playing with one another freely during early childhood, as in any neighborhood, adolescent adjustment may not be so difficult.

In institutions for older boys or girls, or both, the problem is sometimes extremely delicate. Social backgrounds are often so different, the range in mental age and social development so great, that leaders hesitate to promote activities which permit a free association between the sexes. An attitude of "hands-off" is only playing the ostrich, however. As some progressive institution leaders say, "We know that there may be mishaps, but why penalize or cripple emotionally all our boys and girls to avoid a single unfortunate experience?"

It is well to proceed slowly and with caution, but a real effort should be made to devise a workable plan which will permit boys and girls to have a normal social relationship with each other.

WAYS OF ENCOURAGING CO-RECREATION

PARTIES: Parties afford one of the best means of promoting natural boy-girl relationships, especially when they are planned to include novelty dances and partner games.

EXCURSIONS: Swimming and skating parties, picnics, and trips away from the institution are excellent co-recreation activities.

CLUBS: Boys and girls sometimes like to have their own clubs, but a dramatic club, an outing club, a dancing club, and a discussion club are examples of the kinds which are more fun when the group is a mixed one.

JOINT PLAYROOMS: Encouraging boys and girls to share a playground or playroom is one of the simplest methods of promoting a normal social situation. It is well to have a part of the playground set aside for those activities which are not suitable for both sexes. But there should also be, indoors and outdoors, places to be used by boys and girls jointly.

DRAMATICS: Plays and entertainments in which both sexes participate are more interesting to actors and to audiences than those in which the actors are either all boys or all girls.

WORK ENTERPRISES: Work enterprises in which children are naturally interested, such as decorating the gameroom or building an outdoor fireplace, provide ideal opportunities for boys and girls to work together on a project in which they have a common interest.

HANDCRAFT: Some handcraft activities lend themselves naturally to mixed groups. In marionette-making the carpentry work can be done by the boys, the sewing and costume-making by the girls. This should not be a hard-and-fast rule, however. If some girl wants to make a puppet and some boy a costume, there is no reason why they should not.

DATES: One home sponsors "gang dates" of ten or twelve boys and girls for which one group or the other plans the entertainment. Most institutions have arrangements for individual dating, usually setting a curfew time and requiring that some staff member meet the "date" and know where the couple are going.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

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Play Schools Association, *List of Equipment and Supplies—Play Centers for Children of School Age*. New York: 119 West 57 St. \$.25

INDOOR FACILITIES



CHAPTER IV

INDOOR FACILITIES

Every child should have two kinds of places to play indoors: a comfortable living room, and a playroom or “rumpus” room where rough games can be played without fear of damaging the furniture and voices can be raised without fraying adult nerves. Large institutions require other indoor facilities, but no matter how large or how small the home, these two types of rooms for indoor play are minimum essentials. Where space is limited and two whole rooms cannot be set aside exclusively for these purposes, it is often possible to squeeze one or the other type of play corner from the cellar, the hall, or the dormitory.

LIVING ROOMS

Ideally, the living room should be a separate room, comfortably furnished with attractive tables, chairs, rugs, draperies, pictures, and lamps which give proper light. It should contain books and magazines, cards for games, and a piano, radio, record player, or television set. This should be the place for children to visit with each other, play quiet games, read, or listen to music. The living room, more than any other room in the institution, can give the child the feeling of “home,” of being at ease in an environment of comfort, beauty, and quiet.

In many congregate institutions space has been so arranged that the living room and frequently the rumpus room are part of an "apartment" for each group of children. They are adjacent to the dormitory and bathroom, or at least on the same floor as the group sleeping quarters. In some cases there is a separate dining room in each apartment. But in others a section of the living room is used for eating. Frequently this section is separated from the main room by low book shelves, a cupboard, or other attractive and useful pieces of furniture. With this setup children can use whichever part of the apartment suits their interest of the moment, and still have the necessary supervision of the house-mother and whatever assistance may be needed.

Where a separate living room has been completely out of the question, a few ingenious schemes have been put into practice. Some examples follow.

"Cozy corners" in the large playrooms: These corners can be furnished with several comfortable chairs, a window seat or covered chest, a small rug, a lamp, and a bookrack or table. Here the children who are not interested in active games can read, play quiet games, or do puzzles.

"Bed-sitting rooms": One end of the dormitory can be furnished as a sitting room with a table, comfortable chairs, or a couch, a radio or television set, a bookrack, and a writing desk. A number of homes have installed partitions to create a real living room separated from the sleeping quarters.

Making a living room out of a little-used passageway can become an exciting group project. One such room was located in the basement, near the playroom. It had been used to store discarded school benches and some cases of old books. The benches were removed, the books were sorted, and the cases were cleaned and painted. Then simple curtains were made, two rugs were laid on the floor, and other attractive furnishings and decorations were provided. Fluorescent lighting and a couple of table lamps added brightness.

PLAYROOMS

The size and equipment of playrooms depends more than that of living rooms on the age and number of children in the institution, and on the kinds of other facilities available. The playroom should have light walls, sufficient lighting, good ventilation, and plenty of floor space that is neither too dusty nor too hard to take care of. If necessary,

lighting experts should be consulted so that no loss of illumination will occur through poor selection of materials, inadequate wiring, or inefficient arrangement of outlets. Storage space in or near the playroom and convenient toilet facilities are essential. Most of all, the playroom should look like one. Furniture should be durable, decorations should be gay and colorful, and it should foster a feeling of freedom and joy.

The room should be equipped for active play so that the children can engage in their vigorous games here during rainy or inclement weather. Windows should be protected from flying balls. If the room is used by older children, the light fixtures, too, may need screening. Murals painted on the walls or gay posters glued to the walls are better than formal pictures or blank walls. Courts painted on the floor encourage such games as hopscotch, volleyball, ring tennis, and shuffleboard. Wooden floors should be oiled to keep down the dust. If the floor happens to be cement, it is usually more satisfactory if it is painted or waxed. For general play, heavy linoleum is the best covering. Lockers or supply closets are necessary, but they should be so placed that they do not interfere with the children's play or take up valuable space.

In smaller institutions where it is impossible to have the playrooms as part of an apartment, the rooms may have to be shared by different age groups; consequently, some scheduling of time may be necessary. Wherever possible, it is an advantage to have the active playroom near enough to the group living unit so that supervision does not become a problem for the houseparent. In cottages this type of room is frequently in the basement.

PLAYROOMS FOR YOUNGER GIRLS: Playing house, dressing up, and playing school are very much a part of the play of girls up to ten or twelve years of age. Equipment for this type of play can be quite simple but should lend itself to a variety of uses. Old clothes in which to dress up, housekeeping equipment, and castoff materials are more important and appreciated than some of the elaborate and expensive toys often provided. Small sturdy tables and chairs are indispensable. Dolls, miniature furniture, tea sets, play stove, and movable screens with which to divide off rooms should be available; and there should be a pan or sink, clothesline, and other items for washing doll's clothes or play dishes.

Also there should be card games like Pit, Old Maid, and Authors, and such handcraft materials as crayons, paints, old magazines, cardboard, pins, and scissors. A blackboard, all kinds of paper, pencils, chalk, and some sewing materials add variety. For more active play,

bicycles, skates, jump ropes, balls, and jacks will provide endless hours of enjoyment. All these playthings will serve only part of their purpose, however, if the room is not bright and cheery.

PLAYROOMS FOR YOUNGER BOYS: Colorful maps, pennants, and travel posters can be used to dress up the boys' playroom. For their game equipment the boys might make a big chest, and possibly decorate smaller boxes or cans for each individual.

In a playroom for younger boys, adequate floor space should be provided for transportation toys, blocks, and vehicles. There should also be a workbench; and sturdy chairs and tables of proper height for table games, for constructing model planes, making scrapbooks, painting, and pasting. An aquarium or a museum corner will have many loyal "fans." A dress-up box with old costumes, hats, and so forth holds many possibilities for small boys, especially in inclement weather.

Boxes or lockers for personal belongings are essential. The number and the variety of treasures to be found in almost any boy's pocket is proverbially a source of amusement to adults and very precious to the youngster. His treasures may include anything from an earthworm to a bean-shooter. A place near the playroom for his own possessions means a great deal to every boy and also simplifies the problem of keeping him, the playroom, and the dormitory tidy.

CLUBROOM FOR OLDER BOYS: Floor and table games are the major activities in playrooms for older boys. To secure the maximum use of the space available, courts can be painted on the floor for such games as shuffleboard, ring tennis, quoits, and volleyball, if the room is large enough. Equipment should also be provided for box hockey, suction darts, and similar wall and floor games. Among the suitable table games for older boys are checkers, chess, dominoes, table shuffleboard, table bowling, and ping pong.

PLAYROOM FOR OLDER GIRLS: The table and floor games mentioned above are also appropriate for older girls. Their playroom differs from the older boys' chiefly in its decorations and extra furnishings. Girls enjoy fixing up their room with gay draperies, pillows, table covers, and flowers. The decor is usually most satisfactory if it is simple, but distinctly feminine. Older girls often like to do simple cooking. Where possible, it would be desirable to provide a kitchenette near the playroom or in the unit living apartment so candy, desserts, salads, snacks, and possibly light meals can be prepared on occasion.

OTHER PLAY CORNERS: In addition to the definitely appointed rooms for play, almost every institution has some nooks or corners which can be utilized for the benefit of children who have very special hobbies and want to play alone, or which can be given over to small groups to relieve congestion in the living room or playroom. The following suggestions indicate a few of the possibilities:

A corner in a basement was set aside for one of the boys to erect his own radio shop, where he could work on his various homemade sets and repair some of those belonging to the home.

A corner of an upstairs corridor was arranged very cozily, and now serves as a good place for children to curl up and read a book.

Comfortable chairs and attractive tables and desks in dormitories give these rooms a homelike appearance. The children can enjoy studying here, doing their sewing, playing with their dolls, and tinkering.

DECORATIONS AND FURNISHINGS

Decorations and furnishings, not only in the playroom and the living room but throughout the institution, give the home its spirit and personality. These might seem to be outside the province of the recreation leader, but actually they are among his first responsibilities. The joy and abandon of free play flourishes only in an atmosphere of warmth and cheerfulness. Well-chosen color brings gaiety and pleasantness into the home. It promotes a feeling of well-being and interested response on the part of children and staff. Fortunately, only determination and a little ingenuity are required to achieve this atmosphere. The cost can be negligible.

There are many possibilities in different communities for free materials, such as posters, maps, and old prints. Good sources are the public library, travel agencies, camera stores, industrial and commercial agencies, and art groups.

If the houseparent is interested, frequently the children, especially teenagers, enjoy choosing the decorating scheme and making drapes, furniture covers, lamps, and pillows. Throughout the home, color can be added by means of gay draperies, attractive lamps, plants, a bright scarf on the piano, perhaps a small square of colored cloth, a mat, or a bowl of flowers in the center of each dining-room table. Children will get a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction from their surroundings if they are permitted to help plan and perhaps make the furnishings.

SOME SUCCESSFUL DECORATING SCHEMES: Attractive wallpaper, placed behind the shelves in bookcases and on the panels of some of the doors, adds a touch of color to the library and playrooms. A coating of clear shellac gives the paper a durable finish.

In one home, the posts in the playroom are covered with paper splashed with pictures of Mickey Mouse or other motifs which appeal to children. The decorations are changed regularly. During the Christmas holidays, gay Christmas wrapping paper is used.

At another school, the children suspended small pieces of board from the moldings in their bedrooms. On these hanging shelves they put their miniature animals and other knickknacks.

Glass shelves adorned with bright-colored objects and little potted plants have been placed in the windows of the playroom in one home. The children take good care of them and no one seems to mind the extra dusting.

The social worker of one institution gives an interesting account of fixing up their bare, uninteresting boys' dormitory: "We hit on a good motif for its decoration this summer and since then things have begun to brighten up. In the winter we get a glimpse of the lake from that room, and we hear the foghorn and the boats when they blow their whistles. This, combined with the fact that the boys' housefather was once in the Navy, suggested the possibility of making a nautical room out of it. We have the board members sewing anchors and ships' wheels, boats, and flags on bedspreads. The panels of the lockers were covered with wallpaper decorated with ships and the outside trim was painted blue. A volunteer Junior League member made a large decorative map for one of the walls, and we are going to hang a ship's wheel and some life preservers on the opposite wall."

FURNITURE: It is most important that the furniture throughout the home is comfortable in size and height and it must be sturdy to withstand constant use. Sitting up properly in a chair is easier when one's feet are resting comfortably on the floor. The flimsy miniature furniture found in the nursery or playroom of the private home is most impractical for institutions. Well-built furniture which can stand rough treatment need not be bulky nor unsightly.

If makeshift measures must be adopted, wooden orange crates set on end and arranged in line will serve quite satisfactorily as shelves for playrooms. They have also been used for individual dressing tables in bedrooms. When painted or covered with gay cretonne or wallpaper, a crate makes a practical little dresser with a shelf and two compartments

to hold slippers, comb, brush, marbles, photographs, Bible, and other personal possessions. Large boxes or cans can be painted or covered with material to make treasure chests or bedside stools. Where space is limited, these can be utilized for personal things and can be placed under the beds.

Children can be helped to feel responsible and comfortable when the correct equipment is provided. Cleaning up is not such a bad task with a little broom that can be handled easily. Washing dolly's clothes in a small basin can be fun. But it is tiresome and annoying to a child to try to piece together a puzzle, or to color or paste pictures in a scrapbook, when the table is so big one can't reach across it, or so small that nothing will stay on it.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

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All of the following pamphlets are published by the National Recreation Association, 8 West 8 St., New York, N. Y.

Home Playground and Indoor Playroom. \$.20

Make Your Own Games. \$.25

Make Your Own Puzzles. \$.25

BOOKS

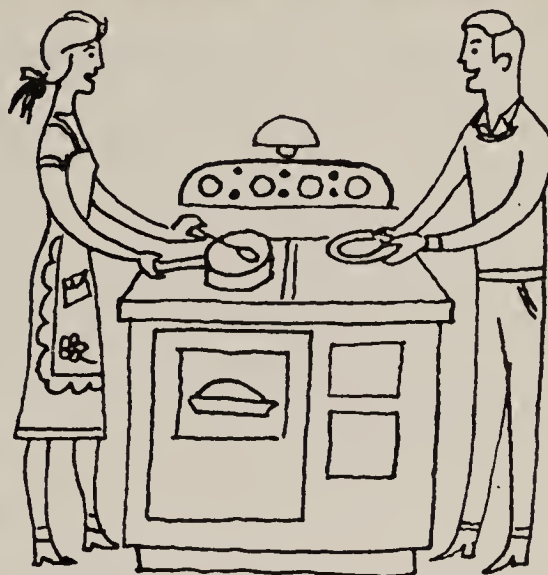
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SPECIAL RECREATIONAL



FACILITIES



CHAPTER V

SPECIAL RECREATION FACILITIES

LIBRARY

Most institutions now provide a variety of books and magazines for each group, in the living room, playroom, dormitory, or some quiet corner. This has the advantage of stimulating informal reading at odd moments because of convenience; and of having reading material distributed according to interest and age level of the children.

For additional variety, use of the community library on an individual basis is encouraged. It gives the children experience in meeting people, taking responsibility, and making choices. In some localities the traveling library will serve the institution with reading material for both staff and children. If this can be arranged on an individual basis the children will gain by learning to use their own cards and making their own selections.

Where it is necessary to have a central library within the institution, the library should be attractive, comfortable, and inviting. Good reading lights are essential, as are a few tables for those who wish to make notes on their reading or for those who want to rest their books on a flat surface. There should also be in the library some comfortable chairs, several floor lamps, a settee, or, even better, a cozy window seat.

Interesting maps on the wall, a globe of the world, posters of foreign countries, nature pictures, and an exhibit case (the contents of which are frequently changed) will all contribute to the attractiveness of the room and will encourage its use.

The exhibit case for the library may be an old bookcase, a showcase from a store, or a discarded china closet. In it there can be displays of new books, children's drawings, scrapbooks, interesting relics borrowed from a public museum, or curios contributed by the children. Shells, birds' nests, post cards, model airplanes, puppets, unusual dolls, needle-work, homemade games, musical instruments—all sorts of things could find their way into such a cabinet to serve as examples of interesting hobbies for other children.

WORKSHOP

Not every institution can boast of a special workshop, but many of the smallest homes have set aside some place in the basement, garage, or tool shed, where the children can hammer and saw, work with wood, metal, or clay, or do any number of different kinds of craft work. The workshop is usually one of the most popular recreation spots in the home. Some work benches, an assortment of tools, and some inexpensive working materials are all that are required for a start.

In equipping a workshop it is better to buy a few good tools than a great many cheaper ones. Saws that won't cut and chisels that snap off put a quick damper on the youthful constructive spirit. Some system for storing and keeping tools in place is essential when many children have to use the same equipment. One system which has been found effective is to paint outlines of the larger tools on the walls. Nails or screw hooks within the outlines hold hammers, saws, and screw drivers. Even the smallest child has no difficulty finding where the saw belongs when he can see a picture of it on the wall.

Small jars with screw tops are excellent for storing nails and screws. The tops can be nailed to the underside of an easily accessible shelf, and labels pasted on the jars to indicate the contents at a glance. Fastening the jars to a shelf in this way saves much-needed working space on the table and storage space on the top of the shelf.

Storage closets are necessary for paints, varnishes, clay, and similar materials. Sometimes when storage chests are not available, a small section of the room is partitioned off with chicken wire, and materials stand in orange crates. As a temporary measure this system has proved most satisfactory.

If the room is large enough, the workshop might also contain sewing machines, a loom for weaving, and any other equipment required for a diversified crafts program.

HOME-ECONOMICS UNIT

A small home-economics unit has proved worth-while in many institutions. Although the girls take home economics in school, they often do not get all the training that is necessary or desirable. Some institutions have a complete set of rooms in which the girls can learn and enjoy all sorts of housekeeping on a small scale suited to private families. Others simply have converted an extra room into an attractive kitchen-dinette with the use of a little paint, some gay chintz, and attractive but inexpensive dishes.

AUDITORIUMS

Although only the larger and more remote institutions have or need elaborately appointed auditoriums, every institution should have some place for dances, parties, musicales, shows, or other entertainment. A playroom is most frequently used for such occasions and is often transformed into a theatre by moving in a portable platform or stage. Sometimes a double living room with sliding doors becomes a "theatre." Occasionally a flight of steps serves as the stage above a corridor in which the audience is seated. In some institutions classrooms are used as auditoriums. Desks are on runners and are moved out when the room is used for other than school purposes. In others, the stage is put in the dining room. Combination auditorium-gymnasiums are common in larger institutions which have separate recreation or school buildings.

RECREATION BUILDINGS

Some institutions have cabins, lodges, or clubhouses built especially for recreational activities.

In a large institution which conducts its own educational program it is possible to plan the school building so that it will serve as a combined school and recreation center. Such a building was constructed at one home and the auditorium affords space for all sorts of dancing, games, and assemblies. One of the classrooms serves as "backstage" when the main room is used for programs and theatricals. A place equipped for food preparation adjoins the auditorium. This makes it possible to hold banquets or dinners quite easily. Portable tables, stage

scenery flats, puppet stage, costumes, and properties are stored in the basement. Classrooms serve not only as classrooms but as clubrooms as well. The art room in the basement is also a handcraft workshop. The basement recreation room furnishes possibilities for roller skating, ping-pong, shuffleboard, various kinds of parties, and also a place for daytime movies. The upper rooms can be used for evening movies.

GYMNASIUMS

Gymnasiums are expensive to build and are recommended only for institutions which have a large population or which are so situated that the children do not have access to gymnasium facilities in the community. Since expert advice is usually desirable in the construction of gymnasiums, only general recommendations will be given here. Ceilings should be high; light and ventilation should be carefully planned; *room for spectators should be provided*; the floor should be free from obstructions and of a surface which is not abrasive nor too hard on the players' feet.

SWIMMING POOL

A swimming pool, like a gymnasium, is such an expensive undertaking that careful consideration must be given to its planning before construction is even started. Plans must be made for adequate chlorination and showering and for ample dressing facilities. If the children must go outdoors to reach their own living quarters after swimming, provision should be made for drying wet hair and for permitting them to remain indoors a short time before running out into the cold. Because of the cost of building and maintaining an indoor pool, most institutions have found it advisable to use the swimming facilities in the community or to install an outdoor pool for summer use only.

PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR THE SICK ROOM

Nothing is more forlorn than the sight of one sick child alone in a dormitory. Flowers to cheer the little patient, a canary to keep him company, and perhaps an aquarium or a dish garden to interest him can make the sick room attractive and less lonely.

Keeping the ill or convalescing child happy is often the duty of the houseparent, and it will be helpful to have some supplies always ready for emergencies. A bag with pockets to tie on the headboard of the bed, or to pin to a screen set beside the bed, is a great timesaver. These

pockets hold crayons, paper, toys, mirrors, and other articles the sick child uses for amusement. He can get them out and put them away himself.

Boxes, assembled within a larger box cupboardwise and placed on a bedside table, can be used for storage in the same way that pockets are used. The child enjoys putting things away to suit himself, and in addition the process consumes long stretches of time which might otherwise drag.

A lap table on which the child does most of his handwork is indispensable. This can be made from a wooden box with the ends and one side removed. An easel made from three sides of a corrugated box, with thumb tacks holding the paper to be used, is practical, too. Lap blackboards and chalk are much in demand among the younger patients.

Strips of "funnies" from the Sunday paper are always popular. If mounted on light cardboard they will be less flimsy and can be held easily even when the child cannot sit up. Items that hold endless possibilities for unsupervised entertainment for the patient include:

An old alarm clock that can be taken apart; a harmonica, a toy piano, an old-fashioned music box; a child's typewriter; a bar of soap to carve; an empty scrapbook to fill with pictures from a stack of old magazines; a box containing empty spools, corks, bits of thread, ribbon, yarn, cloth, lace, beads, and buttons; blunt scissors, cardboard, paper, crayons, and other scraps.

A prism from an old chandelier hung where the morning sunlight shines upon it will reflect rainbows all over the room. Chinese glass chimes suspended in a doorway give out cheerful tinkling sounds whenever there is a slight breeze. A paper pinwheel is entertaining to watch, too.

A set of inexpensive tableware that is different from that used every day will dress up a tray and tempt the reluctant diner. A shoe box marked "mail," placed on the bedside table, can hold notes from school friends, new puzzles, playthings, and other surprises.

A sand table or just a deep tray of sand with some little metal containers or some miniature houses and people with which to make villages and castles will provide hours of entertainment. Sand offers more possibilities for construction and design when damp.

Something alive, like tropical fish, is interesting to watch. And a feeding tray placed outside the window will bring diverting visits from feathered friends.

Bubble-blowing is grand sport. To keep the bedclothes dry, place a wool blanket over the top covers and a raincoat under the lap table.

Shadow pictures on the wall, made with the hands or with cardboard silhouettes, are fun.

Making things with the hands is recommended, too. Among the suitable crafts are simple weaving, clay modeling, crayon pictures, coping-saw work, reed and raffia work, braiding and hooking small mats or pillow covers; knitting and the various types of needlecraft; making naturecraft creatures or other objects with paraffin, pine cones, shells, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, and dried peas; paper-cutting, and making scrapbooks.

Making collections (with the help of outside friends) of match clips, cards, autographs, or pictures—of birds, flowers, ball players—is a popular activity.

A convalescent child often enjoys doing easy tasks if he has company. He might help the housemother shell the peas for dinner, polish the silver, repair Christmas ornaments, or look over the clean laundry to find the holes which require mending. While the child and housemother are working together, there is a chance for interesting conversation and such guessing games as I See, Ghosts, Coffeepot, Limericks, and Riddles.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

New York State Department of Social Welfare, *Aims and Practices for Children's Institutions*. Albany: 112 State St. 1951. (Free)

PERIODICALS

American Camping Association, *Camping Magazine*. Plainfield, New Jersey: 705 Park Ave. \$5.00 annually.

National Recreation Association, *Recreation*. New York: 8 West 8 St. \$4.00 annually.

OUTDOOR



CHAPTER VI

OUTDOOR FACILITIES

Mention has been made of the desirability of having children in institutions attend playgrounds in the community whenever this is possible. Even when children have access to city playgrounds, however, some outdoor space and equipment are desirable for the times when the public grounds are not open to them or when for some reason the children cannot attend. Equipment chosen should stimulate free activity and should provide for participation by different age groups of varying sizes. As many as possible of the following facilities and types of equipment should be included: outdoor fireplace, playhouse, slide, swings, sandbox, horizontal bar, junglegym; a court which is suitable for a variety of games such as volleyball, paddle tennis, ring tennis, and badminton; a hard-surfaced area for skating, hopscotch, jacks, or dancing (this can be a sidewalk or a tennis court which may be flooded for ice-skating in winter); packing boxes, smooth boards, and ladders (which hold unlimited fascination for children under ten); shaded area for storytelling and quiet games; space for individual gardens and digging area; and space for driving golf balls (or a putting green might be considered, since opportunities for playing golf now are available to almost everyone with municipal courses in most communities).

All of these facilities are possible in a relatively small area. However, when budgets are limited and a choice must be made, it is better to

sacrifice the expensive pieces of apparatus. Available funds go further when they provide supplies for games and group activities which lend themselves to various uses.

FACILITIES FOR LARGE OR ISOLATED INSTITUTIONS

Larger and more fully equipped playgrounds are essential in institutions which because of size or location do not have access to public playgrounds. If a playground is to offer a varied program of sports, quiet games, creative activities, and apparatus play, a minimum amount of space is necessary. For a playground intended for the use of 200 children from five to fifteen, the minimum space recommended is two acres. Since children under ten do not play baseball, touch football, and similar highly organized games requiring large playing spaces, their playground can be half as large as the playground for the same number of children up to fifteen years.

Although a balanced program requires certain minimum areas, the multiple use of areas and facilities makes it possible to accommodate any number of children. Three or four baseball diamonds may be required if there are several hundred players, but a single diamond under proper management can be made to serve from eighteen to ninety players during the course of the day. The table which follows indicates the space required for games and sports and the number of children which each area accommodates at one time. The table presented later in this chapter lists the space required for recommended pieces of apparatus. These charts may be helpful in rearranging facilities on an existing playground.

SPACE REQUIREMENTS FOR GAMES AND SPORTS

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Dimensions of play areas (in feet)</i>	<i>Use dimensions (in feet)</i>	<i>Space required (square feet)</i>	<i>Number of players</i>
Softball	45' diamond	175 x 175	30,625	18
Volleyball	25 x 50	40 x 70	2,800	12-16
Paddle tennis	18 x 39	30 x 60	1,800	2-4
Basketball	40 x 60	50 x 75	3,750	10-12
Horseshoes	Stakes 25' apart	12 x 40	480	2-4
Tennis	27 x 78(s)	50 x 120	6,000	2
	36 x 78(d)	60 x 120	7,200	2-4
Handball	20 x 34	30 x 45	1,350	2-4

CONSIDERATIONS IN PLAYGROUND PLANNING

A smooth-running and satisfying program can be insured by careful selection and arrangement of facilities. Care and thoughtfulness in placing apparatus and playing areas can minimize accidents and supervisory problems. Some institutions have a large central playground in addition to small play areas for each cottage or unit-living group. Whatever the type of play area provided, there are some important general considerations which apply to all.

SHADE: A shaded area is important on any playground for storytelling, resting, handcraft, and quiet games. Tables and benches should be provided for the latter two activities. If possible these should be placed on a level spot to avoid the danger of tipping.

DRINKING FOUNTAINS AND TOILET FACILITIES: If the playground is located at some distance from the main building, it is desirable to erect a small shelter to house toilet, washing, and drinking facilities. Where the playground is near a building, some institutions have a bathroom so located in the building that it can be entered directly from the playground. This is convenient for the children, can be supervised easily, and prevents much traffic through a building. Similar convenient facilities for storage of play equipment should be provided also.

HARD-SURFACED AREA: Some hard surface should be provided for roller skating, hopscotch, scooters, bicycles, and sidewalk games; and for general play all year in all kinds of weather. It is well to plan for some area that can be used for ice-skating.

LANDSCAPING: The playground should combine beauty and utility, and there is no need to sacrifice one for the other. Trees, lawns, shrubs, and flowers lend color and beauty to the area. In order to preserve the maximum space for play and to protect more fragile plants and flowers, flower beds should be placed away from the active sports areas. Walks should be arranged between the various playing spaces so that it will not be necessary for children to run across the lawn in going from one area to another. Trees may be used for borders for certain sections, and they afford shade in the sections used for handcraft and quiet activities. Hedges are attractive dividers for different areas.

MAINTENANCE: Playing courts must be rolled, wading pools cleaned, sand boxes filled, backstops repaired, and frames painted. As a rule the worker responsible for the upkeep of the building will also be responsible for the maintenance of the outdoor area. If some of the work is

participated in by children, it should be as a part of their regular work and not as a "leisure-time activity." It is important that the play areas be in proper condition at all times, but it is particularly important to have special areas taken care of in plenty of time for seasonal sports.

SPACE FOR LITTLE CHILDREN: A separate space fenced in or surrounded by a hedge with a gateway should be set aside for children under six if there are any children of this age in the institution. Care should be taken that the little children cannot wander into areas set aside for the play of older children. A space of 3,000-4,000 square feet should be adequate for all activities for up to thirty children in this age group. Sand boxes, chair swings, a low slide (not over five feet high), a junior junglegym, a horizontal ladder (not over four feet from the ground), steps and packing boxes to climb on, and boards, blocks, and boxes to carry around are among the most highly recommended types of equipment. Additional playthings include tricycles, Kiddie Kars, wagons, small barrels, hollow blocks, sand toys, and watering pots.

Convenient storage space should be provided, either by a waterproof shed that can be locked or by an easily accessible room in one of the buildings.

SPACE FOR CHILDREN SIX TO TEN: Wherever possible the play area for children of this age should be separated by hedge, low fence or path into two sections. One section should provide for the running or tag games, relays, singing, and circle games that these children play so frequently and spontaneously. This will eliminate the danger of running into apparatus or of being hit by flying balls.

The total space recommended for this age group is 10,000-15,000 square feet. Swings, slides, seesaws, and junglegyms have a strong appeal for children from six to ten. If it is not possible to have a separate area for these, they should be placed where there is least danger of accidents, possibly against a fence or at one end of the play area.

AREA FOR OLDER BOYS AND GIRLS: Because of the space required for highly organized games and sports, this area must be considerably larger than those previously mentioned. The essential facilities for this division of the playground are the baseball diamond and basketball, volleyball, and horseshoe courts; and some space for games such as prisoner's base and dodge ball. If space and money permit, a track, jumping pit, and courts for such games as tennis, tether ball, and badminton should be added. When possible these courts should be placed in a north-south direction to protect the eyes of the players from the sun.

If the child population is not too large, this area can be used by both boys and girls. In this case care must be taken to see that the girls have a fair opportunity to use the fields. Often their interests are submerged and the boys are allowed to monopolize the baseball diamonds and basketball courts.

When the demand warrants, separate playfields for boys and girls should be provided. The fields may be separated by hedges or paths, but artificial barriers should not set the two apart. Both boys and girls should be permitted to attend each other's games, and if the girls' field is not being used the boys should be allowed to play there and vice versa.

PLAYGROUNDS FOR COTTAGE-TYPE INSTITUTIONS

Where there are many cottages, a single playground is not sufficient. A plan which has been worked out with unusual success in one institution consists of locating in a central area special facilities, such as the track, regulation-size baseball diamond, a football field, and tennis courts, and providing a small playground outside each cottage. Each of these playgrounds provides equipment suited to the age of the children in that particular cottage. The great advantage of this arrangement is that the children can play outdoors before or after meals, or in the in-between minutes when there is not enough time to go to a central playground. To insure maximum use of the area, equipment should be provided to stimulate spontaneous play and quickly organized games.

A typical boys' cottage playground includes sufficient space and a backstop for an informal game of softball, a single basketball standard, a horseshoe court, a table under a tree for quiet games, one or two swings, and a chinning bar. A homemade fireplace can be included. A cottage playground for girls might include a playhouse, a volleyball court, a large enough space for one ol' cat baseball, a table for jacks or checkers, and a swing.

APPARATUS

A large assortment of apparatus is not necessary for a successful playground. There are certain pieces, however, which have a lasting appeal and which possess high merit from the standpoint of fun, physical development and creative use. Apparatus which has only passing amusement value can well be eliminated even though it may look appealing and attractive. Sometimes there is disappointment when the children do not use this type of equipment even though a great deal of money has been spent on it. Recently some experimentation has been going on to

find the type of apparatus and play equipment that will be attractive and of lasting interest to children. Some new and unusual ideas have resulted and there is a "new look" in many playgrounds.

Play sculpture provides equipment of modern design in concrete, tubular steel, and plastic materials. The figures are modernistic, some in the form of animals, and they offer opportunities for climbing, sliding, hiding, balancing, and dramatic play. Another recent trend is the use of building materials such as large pipes, water mains, and bricks built into mazes for climbing or chasing. There are other new items available also. However, the true test of the value of any play equipment is in what the children get out of its use. Generally they enjoy simple things that lend themselves to a variety of activities and imaginative play.

The sand box is the first essential because of its appeal to children and the slight expense involved. There should be two, if possible, one filled with soft white sand, and another for older children with sand which can be dampened and modeled easily. The sand box, preferably a foot or more deep, should be placed where it will be shaded. Where there is no tree, an awning may be used. For part of the day, however, it should be left uncovered, for the sun is the best purifier. The sand should be raked frequently and refuse kept out of the box. A cover should be put over it at night and during storms. This may be a hinged device which will serve as a seat or modeling table when removed.

A digging area in the earth can be sectioned off by curbing or wide planks set firmly around a given space. This affords a welcome change from the sand box; is a different experience; and gives the satisfaction that comes with "working in the soil."

Swings are very popular with children of all ages. Correct size and proper placement of these for safety are essential.

Slides are usually recommended. They have some muscular development value and serve many children in quick rotation. Kindergarten slides should not be more than *four or five feet* high, and slides for older children not more than *eight feet* high.

The seesaw is an old favorite with children, although recreation officials feel it does not have as much value as a slide or swing. It is suggested that fulcrums should not be higher than twenty-two inches.

Climbing apparatus, known under such various names as jungle-gym, castle tower, and circular climb, is enjoyed by both boys and girls of a wide range of ages. While it costs more than smaller pieces of equipment, the upkeep is negligible. Care should be taken that these are of proper height and size for the age groups that will use them.

The horizontal bar of adjustable height has great physical value. Children love to hang and stretch, “chin the bar,” and “skin the cat.” The bar affords many possibilities for stunts and challenges, and has the advantage of being one of the least expensive pieces of apparatus. Safe placement is of primary importance.

Balance beams can substitute for curbstones and are good for balancing and “walking the tight rope.” Beams are made by placing a two-by-four, sixteen feet long, on three or four low wooden horses. The horses should be of the same height but may vary from three inches in height, for the smaller children, to a foot in height for the older ones.

SPACE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPARATUS

<i>Type of apparatus</i>	<i>Dimensions of apparatus</i>		<i>Approximate space requirements (in feet)</i>	<i>Space (in square feet)</i>
	<i>Length (in feet)</i>	<i>Height (in feet)</i>		
Slide, Gang	16	8	25 x 40	1,000
Slide, Kindergarten .	8	4 to 5	8 x 20	160
Swings (3)	15 (top)	12	30 x 35	1,050
Swings (4)	18 (top)	10	24 x 30	720
Swings (6)	30 (top)	12	30 x 50	1,500
Seesaws (4)	12	2	20 x 20	400
Jungle gym (jr.) ...	6.5	7	12 x 15	180
Jungle gym (med.) .	10	10.5	20 x 20	400
Horizontal Bar	6	7.5 (max.)	12 x 20	240
Balance Beam	12	.5	6 x 20	120
Sand Box	6 x 10 (min.)	1	15 x 20 (min.)	300

HOMEMADE APPARATUS: Sand boxes, balance beams, seesaws, and basketball standards can be made by older boys or by institution workmen. Homemade swings and some of the climbing devices are also satisfactory if they are used by only a few children, are properly constructed from good materials, and are kept in constant repair.

It must be kept in mind that the safety of the children is more important than any amount of apparatus and safety should never be jeopardized by faulty equipment or cheap materials. If swings, slides, and climbing apparatus are to be used by many children, it is wiser to purchase a few pieces from reliable companies than to depend on home-made equipment, the safety and durability of which cannot be guaranteed.

CARE OF APPARATUS: Apparatus should be inspected regularly and damaged pieces removed immediately or locked until repairs can be made. There should be pits filled with sand or shavings at the foot of slides and small apparatus. Space underneath apparatus should be kept free of obstructions.

SPECIAL OUTDOOR FACILITIES

PLAYHOUSE: One of the most popular facilities on a playground is the playhouse, where imagination can run riot. A playhouse should have a hard surface floor, waterproof roof, and sides rising to about five feet above the floor.

One type is made with the wooden part of the sides about three feet from the floor, and screening in the upper part all around. These may or may not have doors. Mud and rain cannot splash in and there is no problem of supervision. Another type is more substantial and can be made entirely of wood or other durable material. Openings which serve as doors or windows should be so arranged that they can be closed up easily and securely, thus providing a storage house for play equipment. If this type is well built, the roof can be fenced and used as an additional play area. Sometimes it is advisable to have a ramp at the door so that wheel toys can be taken in and out easily.

SHACKS: At the age when the gang spirit flourishes, most boys long to have a shack or a "private place" where they can hold their secret meetings and their gang can gather. Usually the boys are interested in constructing their own shack, which sometimes turns out to be sturdy, attractive, and permanent.

OUTPOST AREA: Some institutions have found the children to be very much interested in clearing a secluded spot on the grounds so they can have some experience in outdoor living. Depending upon the age of the children and the leadership available, these outposts can be anything from a leanto with pioneer camping facilities for latrines, food storage, and so forth, to a simple tent with a crude fireplace over which to cook a hamburger. These areas can be used for a day-camp program, a week or more of camp living for certain groups, overnight hikes, or day trips. If the grounds are large enough there can be several of these outposts so the groups using them can be kept small. If only one outpost can be provided, it is better to have small groups take turns using it so the feeling of camaraderie and adventure can be preserved.

OUTDOOR FIREPLACES: Eating supper out of doors is always fun. Numerous institutions which have only small backyards have outdoor fireplaces. It is best to plan so that no more than ten or twelve children use a fireplace, for each one can then share in the enjoyment and responsibility.

WOODLANDS: When the institution is fortunate enough to have woodlands and meadows, the children need not have to go far afield for such outdoor activities as skiing, sledding, fishing, tramping, camping, and exploring.

WINTER-SPORTS AREAS: Facilities for skating, sledding, and snow games should certainly be provided in institutions situated in parts of the country where there are snow and ice during the winter months. Sled slides have been erected on some playgrounds. A place for ice-skating is often the biggest problem, but some have solved this by flooding their hard-surfaced tennis courts, or banking, flooding or spraying the volleyball court or a level part of the playground.

WATER SPORTS: Few institutions are fortunate enough to have their own lakes or streams for swimming, boating, fishing, and water sports. Certain of the simpler types of water activities are possible, however, wherever there is adequate outdoor space.

Pools for sailing boats or for wading are a real asset. Outdoor showers or water sprays on hot summer days are a great delight, too. One institution has worked out an interesting scheme for outdoor showers. An overhead pipe runs from the main building to a smaller building about fifty feet away. Three openings in the pipe, fitted with sprinkling devices, comprise the showers. The ground underneath is surfaced with concrete so that the children will not track mud into the house. A drain carries off the water. During the spring, fall, and winter, the concrete area is used for roller skating and sidewalk tennis.

It is of the utmost importance that institutions with outdoor swimming pools operate their pools in such a manner as to assure purity of water and the safety of bathers at all times. Any water program should be planned and supervised by an adult certified lifeguard or instructor who should be present at all times when children or staff are in the water.

PAVILIONS: On large playgrounds, pavilions afford shelter on rainy days, a place for quiet activities, parties, and sometimes for skating.

They vary from simple shelters with wooden floors and rough benches to more elaborate buildings with concrete floors, and walls that can be removed in summer.

OUTDOOR THEATRES: An outdoor theatre may be only a corner of the yard where trees and hedges form a natural stage, suitable for make-believe play or informal dramatics. Or it may be more pretentious, with special plantings outlining the stage and wings, and a miniature amphitheatre with graduated grass steps serving as the auditorium. Whenever new plantings or a change in landscaping are planned, the possibilities of an outdoor theatre should be considered.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

Lambert, Clara, *When They Play Out of Doors*. New York: Play Schools Association, 41 West 57 St. 1945. \$.20

National Recreation Association, *The Conduct of Playgrounds*. New York: 8 West 8 St. 1954. \$.75

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TOYS

AND

PLAY



EQUIPMENT

CHAPTER VII

TOYS AND PLAY EQUIPMENT

Even if it has to be a “just pretend doll” made of a clothespin and a scrap of cloth, most little girls long for a dolly to play with. A boy will be content with a slab of wood for a bat, but he will need to get himself a ball when the baseball fever rises in the spring.

While it is true that children can play without toys and playthings, the scope and content of their activities are greatly limited when play materials are lacking. Many games like baseball, volleyball, jacks, and table tennis are not possible at all unless equipment is provided.

Toys and game equipment need not be expensive. Much of it can be made, some of it by the children themselves. The most important consideration is that the assortment include the things that children want, and which will bring them the greatest satisfaction.

Among the supplies recommended for outdoor use are balls, bats, and other equipment for sports; implements for outdoor cooking, gardening, and sand play; supplies for individual activities, such as jump-ropes, marbles, skates, jacks, kites, and sleds; and materials for building shacks, scooters, and pushmobiles.

Supplies for indoor activities should include mats, nets, and other equipment for indoor sports; puzzles, table and floor games; special equipment such as blackboards, easels, and sand table; tools and materials for handwork; books and magazines; costumes and properties for imaginative play.

SELECTION OF PLAYTHINGS

The principles which follow, gleaned from the experiences of many institutions, are helpful in selecting and caring for playthings.

1. *See that each child has some personal plaything.* These may be balls, marbles, dolls, kites—things that he can call his very own and lend or give to other children. Other playthings should be “community owned.” These are usually the more expensive pieces of equipment, such as a ping-pong set, an express wagon, a game of checkers, a doll house, or a bicycle. They are the property of a single department or of the whole institution.

2. *Select playthings according to the age and interest of the children who are to use them.* It is inadvisable to give a child a mechanical toy before he is old enough to appreciate it. He will only pull it apart, or be frustrated continually because he cannot make it go. Toys and equipment made for younger children should not be used by older boys and girls, as their weight and strength soon put such things out of working order. This is disappointing and expensive. Particular care should be taken about size and sturdiness when providing tricycles, bicycles, and blocks.

3. *Avoid giving too many playthings at once.* Children’s interests are fleeting, not because they are perverse or fickle but because they are not mature enough to concentrate for long periods of time. Some superintendents keep part of the Christmas recreation supplies for distribution at a later time. This has proved to be wiser than giving the children all their playthings at once and expecting them to keep them intact until next year brings a new assortment.

4. *Choose sturdy playthings.* As in the selection of furniture, it must be remembered that recreation supplies in a children’s home are going to get hard and constant use. It is better to have a few well-made games than a great many flimsy ones which will wear out in a short time. A light bat and a cheap baseball may be perfectly satisfactory for

an individual child. In an institution such equipment is not only impractical but harmful. Children very soon ask themselves: "Why take care of this? It won't last long anyway."

Many institutions are encouraging boys and girls to make their own games. Since so many can be made from scrap materials, the children are likely to have a greater variety than they could otherwise. Then, too, there is no better way for a person to acquire respect and appreciation for the things he uses than to make them himself. But these should supplement the basic, sturdy games provided by the institution.

When the recommendation has been made to institutions that sturdy playthings should be insisted upon, leaders have sometimes countered with the objection that they are dependent on donations and must be grateful for what they receive. A number of institutions, however, have hit on the happy scheme of furnishing lists of needed playthings to groups who are interested in donating toys. Organizations are usually enthusiastic over the plan. It is much more personal than buying toys in wholesale lots. Members get a real thrill choosing just the train Johnny wants, the doll carriage that Betty has been longing for, or in providing a lasting gift to a group such as a record player, a set of blocks, or a bicycle.

5. *Use correct equipment to get the most out of games.* Makeshift equipment may be necessary as a stopgap, and is certainly better than none, but a game of basketball is most satisfactory if a real basketball is used and not a volleyball or tennis ball. A rope stretched across a court will serve when there is no net, but paddle tennis, volleyball, and badminton are much more interesting games when real nets are provided.

6. *Purchase equipment from reliable sources.* Quite naturally, institution superintendents try to do their purchasing locally. This is an understandable attitude but is wise only if it allows the selection of the best materials from the standpoint of economy, safety, durability, and appropriateness. It should be possible to buy athletic supplies through a local sporting goods store and still insist upon the products of a reliable firm.

When purchasing books, handcraft supplies, and card games, the same principles concerning durability and economy apply to their selection as to the purchase of athletic supplies. There is no economy in buying the cheapest products unless there is some assurance that they will last under hard and constant use.

CARE AND USE OF EQUIPMENT

1. *Teach the correct use of supplies.* Teaching children the proper way of handling equipment is important if it is to last. Games are more enjoyable if the correct rules for playing are properly understood. Children should not be blamed for kicking volleyballs if they have never been taught that volleyballs are not sturdy and should only be thrown, caught, or batted with the hands. Boys and girls may not realize that batting stones with a baseball bat will nick the bat so badly that it will not afterwards send baseballs in a straight line, or that tennis balls left out in the rain will go "dead." When equipment is distributed, its correct use should be demonstrated and information should be offered concerning its proper handling. Most of the destructiveness of children can be attributed to ignorance of correct usage.

2. *Keep together all the equipment for one activity.* How often does one hear the cry, "We can't play! Some checkers are missing." Devising some satisfactory scheme for putting equipment away easily and quickly will do wonders in keeping games intact. Cigar boxes, carefully labelled, are excellent for counters, spinners, and other small parts of table games. Watertight storage bins should be provided for balls, bats, and gloves. Discarded coffee tins are excellent for marbles, beads, jacks, and scissors. Stronger boxes should replace the original cardboard ones that usually hold puzzle pieces, crayons, paints, and sewing materials. Pincushions for stray pins and bags for bits of thread will keep the sewing basket tidy.

3. *Always have some playthings in sight.* Supplies that are locked away receive only limited use. A doll house, a ping-pong table, or a toy train left in full view often suggest activities to children who are at a loss for ideas. Also, they help give the play room color and the character of being used.

4. *Teach children to put toys away.* Even the littlest tots can be taught successfully to put back blocks and other playthings after they have finished using them. Developing this sense of orderliness may require great patience, but it is certainly better for the child than to lock toys away from him. Care should be taken about the way this is handled. Too much stress on putting away as an end in itself will discourage use of materials and equipment. Working along with the children is the best method of teaching them to be orderly. The children will need some warning and plenty of time so that putting away can be done willingly, while anticipating the next activity.

5. *Provide each child with a place for his personal playthings.* Not only should a child have his own playthings but he should have a place to keep them. This, just as possessing his own things, will help give him a sense of ownership and responsibility and an appreciation of the rights of others. Lockers, cubby holes, chests, boxes, drawers, cupboards, shelves—various devices are used to provide a place for a child's personal possessions.

At one institution each child keeps his playthings in a strong box which is bolted to the footboard of his bed. The box is on castors and moves as the bed is moved to simplify cleaning.

6. *Keep playthings in good repair.* Equipment is going to wear out. Broken parts must be repaired and lost parts replaced if the supplies are to continue to serve their purpose. A new coat of paint preserves many playthings and reclaims their original brightness and attractiveness. Children love color. Gay playthings always appeal to them more than drab or dingy ones. This fact should be remembered in choosing and caring for equipment. Safety and constructive use of toys are factors to be considered. It is recommended that anything needing repair be immediately removed from use. The children often enjoy helping to fix toys if the job is simple, or to observe a complicated operation. Allowing children to participate often expedites the return of the article to use, and may promote better care of it.

SOME "NOT-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN" PLAY MATERIALS

A "dress-up wardrobe" is indispensable. It should contain high-heeled shoes, belts, beads, pocketbooks, scarves, lace curtains, gloves, large hats, and all the bits of finery one can think of. A box of Halloween costumes is good, too, but the contents of the dress-up wardrobe should be for everyday use.

For girls under ten years there should be a dollhouse. This need not be elaborate. It might be a four-room affair made of two orange crates painted on the outside and papered within. Keeping house and the constant rearrangement of the furnishings will fill many happy hours.

A "rainy-day chest" can also be a gold mine of play ideas. In it go all the scraps of paper, string, crayons, parts of games, puzzle pieces, and other things which have been discarded because of breakage or lack of interest, or which have been left lying around. The chest is opened when a siege of bad weather or quarantine keeps the children indoors. Then its treasures suggest activities that have been forgotten and new ones never thought of before.

Scrapbooks of all sorts are a constant source of entertainment. The blank pages of a new scrapbook may be filled with post cards; pictures of athletes, babies or animals; a series of jokes, riddles, or poems; and snapshots of a child and his playmates or family. The scrapbook may be centered upon one theme or it may be a conglomeration of all sorts of things. Whether it is made at the home or is donated, the scrapbook will hold unlimited fascination for some of the children. Not every child wants to make a scrapbook, and many have no desire to look at them, but no scrapbook will go completely unnoticed in a children's home.

"Odds and ends" are most important. By these are meant the extra scissors, paste, bits of cloth, cardboard, string, magazines, bags, beads, and feathers that are constantly solicited from the housemother for all sorts of occasions; large crates, old auto tires, extra lengths of rope, discarded kitchen pots, pans, and utensils; and boxes, cartons, and cans of all sizes that are needed for so many playground activities. These are the play materials which are often not thought of because they seem so useless to adults. To the children they are the treasures out of which they create some of their most spontaneous and imaginative play.

For the outdoor playground there are some things that require little money and offer much to the imagination: circular logs cut two inches thick from telegraph poles or trees; nests of boxes, open on one side and ranging from eighteen inches square to small ones, each painted a bright color; bright colored burlap sacks filled with excelsior or sawdust; hoops; barrels and kegs, painted or shellacked, some with lids and others open; saw horses; and old soccer and volley balls stuffed with excelsior, cotton seeds, or sawdust and hung from a tree by a rope—to be kicked or punched.

BULLETIN BOARDS

A bulletin board can be interesting and colorful. The more one is used, the more indispensable it will become. It need not be elaborate. If it is made from soft wood, or from some porous material such as wall board, thumbtacks can be used for posting. If covered with burlap, posters and papers can be pinned on. One of heavy cardboard, painted a dark color so that white paper notices will show up, is better than none at all. Here can be posted announcements of coming events, rosters of committees, changes in schedule, rules and regulations of tournament play (as well as the results of such play), poems or quotations, interesting newspaper clippings, and exhibits of all sorts.

At one school, the bulletin board is used as a means for holding contests in memorizing, word-building, writing limericks, and solving puzzles and riddles.

Bulletin boards must not be unsightly or cluttered up with a profusion of papers of various sizes and colors. The notices must be changed frequently and out-of-date material removed, otherwise the boards will fail to hold interest.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

The selection of books and magazines suitable for children of different ages, abilities, and interests is often a perplexing problem. Too many institution libraries contain the discards from some well-intentioned person's attic, so out-of-date or so adult in their interest that the children never touch them. Often help can be obtained from the public library. Frequently institution children have had little previous experience or interest in stories or reading, so selections should be made to appeal to the children's interest rather than made on the basis of age or grade level recommendations.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

Association for Childhood Education, Inc., *Children's Books for Eighty-Five Cents or Less*. Washington, D. C.: 1200 15 St. 1952. \$.50

—————, *Uses for Waste Materials*. Washington, D. C.: 1200 15 St. 1951. \$.50

National Recreation Association, *For the Storyteller*. New York: 8 West 8 St. 1938. \$.75

PUTTING THE PROGRAM



INTO OPERATION

CHAPTER VIII

PUTTING THE PROGRAM INTO OPERATION

Taking the long view of the recreation program, the wise director will consider the importance of three human traits: love of variety, love of the familiar, and love of climaxing events. For interest, offer enough changes of program to stimulate those children who remain for longer periods and to break the sameness of institutional life. Remember that surprises are like "rain on the desert" in an institution. Have plenty of them.

Traditional features of the program might be Field Day on the Fourth of July, Alumni Day, the Annual Strawberry Festival, and exhibits.

A satisfying climax spurs interest and effort. An occasional hobby show will give the youthful craftsman an opportunity to display his creations and to receive the recognition he deserves and needs. A circus at the end of the summer session provides an incentive to practice stunts, tumbling, and dances and then get ready for the show. These spectacular

finales provide goals which help motivate the program and keep interest and enthusiasm high. But care must be taken that they do not submerge the day-to-day activities in which children engage just for the fun of it, and that they do not become overstimulating or cause undue pressure on staff or children.

During the summer a special activity may be conducted each week, provided that time is left for spontaneous play. The program of special activities should balance shows, exhibits, and pageants with hikes and swims which require no special preparation. A successful schedule must always be flexible, but a tentative plan, worked out in detail, assures a more balanced program.

Cooperation among all staff workers is absolutely necessary if the program is to succeed. If all are informed about the basketball team's schedule, the time of the Scout rally, what excursions are to be taken by various groups and on what dates, they can plan their own work better. Also, they will feel "in on things," and be more willing to help with these projects when the actual time comes. The attitude of staff members toward recreation will either be sympathetic, antagonistic, or indifferent. The two latter attitudes can be corrected sometimes if the recreation leader or program director takes an interest in the jobs and problems of others. The houseparents should have a part in planning the schedule and their suggestions should be given every consideration.

Thoughtfulness and foresight should be a byword. Thank-you notes sent to individuals or groups who have contributed to the program are always appreciated and pave the way for future favors. Acknowledgments sent by individual children or a children's club are especially appealing. This gives the children an opportunity to become familiar with social practice, and can be a pleasant activity for the group.

With these general guideposts in mind, the following suggestions are offered to the program director, houseparents, or leaders responsible for the recreation program.

First, list the national holidays. They will guide you on themes for parties, decorations, and entertainment features. Next, prepare a list of possible special events which might occur during the year, such as a doll show, amateur hour, or a tumbling exhibition; then, a list of the places of civic, scenic, historic, or scientific interest which might be objectives on excursions away from the institution. Possibilities for competition come next. Put down all the activities in which competitions might be staged, such as softball, hopscotch, and poetry writing.

The following are sample lists which may serve as models on which to build a complete program adapted to any local situation. Select a few of these ideas to work on each season according to locality, fashion-of-the-moment, interest of the children, ability of the leader, and so forth. Age groups will probably choose different activities, but some of the events, like Field Day and pageants, invite participation by the entire institution.

YEAR'S SCHEDULE BY SEASONS

FALL			
<i>Holidays,</i>			
<i>Special Events</i>	<i>Excursions</i>	<i>Competitions</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Labor Day	Observe	Touch football	Roller skating
Columbus Day	harvesting	Stilts	Hiking
Halloween	Halloween	Box hockey	Collecting
Veterans Day	parade	Song writing	Outdoor cooking
Election Day	Cannery	Essay contest	Make gifts, cos-
Thanksgiving	State fair	Camera contest	tumes, cards
First day of fall	Football game	Soccer	
Book week	Supper hike	Field hockey	
Election party			

WINTER			
<i>Holidays,</i>			
<i>Special Events</i>	<i>Excursions</i>	<i>Competitions</i>	<i>Activities</i>
Christmas	City council	Checkers	Indoor gardens
New Year's Day	Factory or mill	Spelling bee	Glee club
Lincoln's	Post office	Chess	Tumbling
Birthday	Shopping tour	Card games	Sledding
Washington's	Fire house	One-act play	Ice skating
Birthday	Police station	Public speaking	Knitting
St. Valentine's	Bank	Quiz program	Cooking
Day	Greenhouse	Snow sculpture	Clubs for
Ground-hog Day	Museum		charm, debat-
First day of	Art gallery		ing, model
winter	Christmas deco-		airplanes
Tumbling	rations		
exhibit			
Progressive			
games			
Amateur night			
Winter carnival			

SPRING

<i>Holidays,</i>			
<i>Special Events</i>	<i>Excursions</i>	<i>Competitions</i>	<i>Activities</i>
St. Patrick's	Newspaper	Poetry writing	Hikes
Day	plant	Jacks	Bird walks
Easter	Garden tour	Marbles	Kite making
May Day	Breakfast hike	Hopscotch	Gardening
Mother's Day	Baseball game	Rope skipping	Bicycling
Father's Day	Carnival	Track meet	Roller skating
Memorial Day	Historic spot	Softball	Outdoor
First day of	Scenic spot	Music festival	breakfast
spring			Continue clubs
Hobby show			
Egg hunt			
Spring prom			
Graduation			
party			
Tea for teachers			
Wheel parade			

SUMMER

<i>Holidays,</i>			
<i>Special Events</i>	<i>Excursions</i>	<i>Competitions</i>	<i>Activities</i>
First day of	Overnight hike	Horseshoes	Story hour
summer	Camping trip	Sand models	Campfires
Fourth of July	Fireworks	Soap sculpture	Reading club
Flag Day	display	Athletic tests	Swimming
Playground	Dairy	Top spinning	Boating
circus	Farm	Soap bubbles	Fishing
Pet show	Circus	Dodge ball	Puppetry
Doll show	Boat ride	Paddle tennis	Star talks
Lantern parade		Volley ball	Handcraft
Water carnival			
Treasure Hunt			

TRIPS

When trips are taken or when some community facility opens its resources to the children, those responsible are always pleased to have a note of appreciation from the children.

Trips should be carefully planned and preparation should be made well in advance so there will be no last minute rush, confusion, or disappointment.

Community groups are usually glad to know ahead of time about a contemplated visit and will probably take the opportunity to give the institution information that will make the trip easier and more enjoyable for staff, children, and host. Those in charge of the place to be visited like to know how many children will be present and their ages; the time of arrival; the adult in charge; the number of chaperones, and any other data which will help in preparing for the group. The institution should find out about hours; parking and toilet facilities; age or other limitations; arrangements for eating and resting; fees, tickets, or letter of admission; the need for cushions, blankets, clothing or other special equipment; the rules or regulations that should be understood by children before going; and the items which will require money for each child, such as rides, admission, food, and souvenirs.

Staff, volunteers, and children should know their respective responsibilities and assignments and understand them clearly before leaving the institution. It will save confusion if each adult knows just which children to keep track of, and children should be asked to report to *only one* adult during the entire trip. If any changes are to be made, *all* concerned should be informed. The adults involved should discuss and agree on the change. Time schedules, bus, car, or other transportation assignments should be clear.

If trips are taken in small groups, they are usually less overstimulating or tiring and more enjoyable. If large groups go from the institution it has been found helpful to arrange to have at least one adult available for every ten children, so the smaller groups can go their separate ways on arrival at the destination.

A committee of children can help greatly with planning and carrying out the trip program. Such a committee will make it easier to keep in touch with the children's real interests and enthusiasms.

When possible it is desirable for at least one staff member to visit the place of an anticipated excursion in advance to become familiar with the possibilities for enjoyment and to avoid possible confusion or disappointment.

RECORDS

Keeping records and reports on the leisure-time program is time consuming for busy staff, but it can be very helpful. Each institution will decide how much of this they will want to do and how much time to give to it.

Of utmost importance is the reporting of observations made of each individual child so this information can become part of his perma-

nent record. The houseparent and anyone else who spends time with a child during his leisure hours should contribute to this report. Helpful data for the social worker, psychiatrist, placement agency worker, superintendent, parent, and others would include a child's particular likes or dislikes, his general attitude towards children, games, activities, and equipment; information on participation, leadership, withdrawal, special abilities, and so forth.

Inventories should be made at regular intervals so that supplies and repairs can be kept up-to-date. The children can be helpful in doing this job and can learn from it about the need to budget money and materials and to make choices.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

Play Schools Association, *Program Planning for Bus Trips*. New York: 119 West 57 St. \$.60

—————, *Trips for Children*. New York: 119 West 57 St. 1953. \$.15

All of the following pamphlets are published by the National Recreation Association, 8 West 8 St., New York, N. Y.:

The Christmas Book. 1941. \$.75

Easter Crafts and Games. 1950. \$.15

Fun for Hallowe'en. 1950. \$.25

Our Patriotic Holidays. \$.25

The Playground Summer Notebook. \$2.50

St. Valentine's Day. \$.35

Summer Playground Evaluation. \$.25

The Thanksgiving Book. \$.25



CHAPTER IX

LEADERSHIP

Experience in all types of programs has shown that effective leadership is more valuable than any number of elaborate facilities. Whenever leadership is withdrawn from well-equipped areas, attendance decreases and rowdyism may flourish. On the other hand, the presence of a good leader can transform even poor areas into happy playgrounds humming with joyous activity.

Good leadership is essential to a successful recreation program in institutions. It is important to employ a trained and experienced person who can give the program enlightened direction and can coordinate the recreation activities with other phases of the program.

DUTIES OF A PROGRAM DIRECTOR

In order to plan and conduct a balanced program and to attain the objectives of constructive and joyous play, the program director must do many things. Through conversations, questionnaires, a recrea-

tion council, observation, staff conferences, and meetings, the interests of children and staff must be discovered and their cooperation secured.

An important part of the job is to arrange for numerous and varied community contacts, acquainting children and staff with civic programs, and planning mixed social functions which offer adequate opportunities for boys and girls to enjoy activities together.

A major portion of the program director's time should be given to training other staff in recreation leadership techniques. This may be done through staff or individual conferences, general supervision, in-service training courses, and demonstration. Some recreation for the staff should also be arranged. This may be only a monthly social evening of some sort or it may mean simply the establishment of an attractive social room equipped with comfortable furnishings and supplies for interesting diversions to be at the disposal of the staff members when they are free from duties. Orienting, training, and assigning volunteers would also be a responsibility of the program director.

Another duty is to see that the facilities for recreation are the best possible, that supplies are in good repair and well stocked. Needs in the way of supplies and equipment must be anticipated and should be ordered carefully and in advance.

A periodic evaluation of the program should be made, changing and adjusting as may be advisable. The program director's leadership, experience, and ability are particularly important in this. It is frequently necessary to interpret the need for program adaptation or change to the community, administration, staff, and children so they will understand and accept progress.

QUALITIES OF A RECREATION OR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

In selecting a person to handle such responsibilities as those mentioned, and in evaluating capabilities, certain qualities should be required. Above all, this person should like children and be able to get along easily with them. A program director must be an excellent organizer, and he or she must have personal magnetism and sincere interest.

Besides getting along with the children, the program director must be able to get along with other staff members. This means not only cooperation with the superintendent, but an understanding of and respect for the responsibilities of other workers, such as those in the kitchen, office, dormitories, and sewing room.

The recreation leader must be resourceful enough to create a rich program, even when funds are limited, and to adapt to changing circumstances. Initiative and patience are two qualities that are mentioned together because of the tendency in institutions to be satisfied with a traditional program, and because of the slow administrative processes and red tape which so often accompany changes in routine. The recreation leader also needs a sense of humor and must be especially sensitive to the children's wishes and not try to force upon them activities in which they are not interested.

Although the leader works with groups, thinking must be constantly in terms of the individual, arranging opportunities to meet each one's special needs. It goes without saying that the leader must be fair in judgment and impartial in attention to individual children and that his or her personal standards must be unconscious examples to the children. The leader must have a vision of the whole field of child welfare and must be capable of seeing and interpreting play and recreation as an important part of and contribution to the entire picture.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The program director should be expected to know the mechanics of making schedules, and should be able to plan a balanced program and to arrange details. Some knowledge of games and sports and how to organize teams and conduct tournaments is necessary. Skill in at least one type of creative recreation is essential. An appreciation for the talents of others is important so that there will be interest in securing the necessary leadership from volunteers or from other staff members in order to provide a varied and interesting program.

The program director should have at least an elementary acquaintance with the philosophy and techniques of social work, as well as knowledge of group work. The program director must understand that planning and carrying out activities for institution children has many aspects that are different from recreation work in other facilities, so there must be a willingness to adjust and adapt professional skills and techniques.

The program director should be interested in the total twenty-four-hour experience of the children and should be available for planning and supervising the program evenings, weekends, and during vacations. Because of this and the fact that staff training usually has to be done while the children are in school, the program director's time schedule may have to be quite irregular. However, hours of duty per week should

not exceed the agency limit for professional staff and there should be provision for vacation, sick leave, and other appropriate benefits. The position calls for full-time work even in a small institution.

At the present time, titles, responsibilities, and compensation for this position vary greatly in different institutions. However, it has become recognized as one of the important jobs on the staff because of the great need for a coordinated, balanced, and flexible program for the children, and for in-service training, supervision, and support for staff, especially houseparents. In some small institutions the program director acts in the absence of the superintendent or as assistant.

THE HOUSEPARENT

Many kinds of leadership are required for the successful operation of a balanced recreation program. The role of the houseparent has been increasing in this phase of institution living because of smaller groups of children and closer relationships with them in unit or cottage living. While most houseparents have one or more leisure-time skills to share with their children (like knitting, shell work, athletics, and carpentry), the principal asset they can bring to the job is an understanding of children's play needs and an interest in providing time, opportunity, and space for the pursuit of individual and group interests.

It is important for the houseparent to be able to tolerate "constructive untidiness" so that the children can have their projects at hand to work on at odd moments. Children will be discouraged easily if "putting away" and rigid neatness are a constant worry. Leaving a jigsaw puzzle to finish the following day, a table or shelf with clay work in various stages of completion, costumes in the making, or mechanical parts lined up in order on a desk or table, may clutter a room somewhat and be of concern to a spic-and-span housekeeper. But for the houseparent who sees this "orderly confusion" as an occasional necessity for sustaining the interests of the children and as a means of helping them take responsibility for their own and other people's property, it becomes part of the "lived in" atmosphere of the group quarters.

The houseparent who understands and is interested in the children's play does not have to take all of the leadership. The children will have ideas about games, activities, projects, and so forth from school, home, community contacts, and general crafts or playground groups, to carry over into their unit or cottage leisure time. The houseparent's role is to encourage, observe, be helpful, and to participate when requested. There will be times, however, when the houseparent

will have to offer some stimulation or leadership to steer the group into constructive play or acceptable activities. The program director can be most helpful in assisting houseparents to be ready for such occasions.

SPECIALISTS

The services of full- or part-time specialists are frequently employed. They may be volunteer or paid workers, and their duties may range from giving individual music lessons to coaching athletic teams. In college towns it is often possible to secure students to lead recreation activities. Sometimes an arrangement allowing for credit can be made with the college. Certain agencies furnish leaders for specific assignments. The American Red Cross provides teachers in first-aid and life-saving. Some gas and electric companies send cooking instructors to institutions. Through churches, lodges, and social groups in the community it is often possible to find individuals who are willing to give some personal service to the institution with or without compensation.

VOLUNTEERS

Opinions concerning the worth of volunteer leadership vary. Some superintendents feel that the extra supervision that is necessary, the disappointments and sometimes flat failures that happen, and the readjustment in schedules that must be made, overbalance the benefits. Yet there are just as many administrators who feel that the stimulus which a new personality brings into the institution and the enlargement of the program which volunteers make possible, justify their use.

As a precaution against too frequent disruption of the schedule by individuals to whom volunteering is only a passing fancy, it is advisable to have definite policies and procedures which volunteers understand before starting to work in the institution. Unless one staff member, preferably the program director, can be assigned to handle the entire volunteer program, it is better not to try one. Volunteers need constant encouragement, recognition, support, and interpretation in understanding their role and the particular needs of children who must be away from home. The person in charge of volunteers must be resourceful enough to take care of occasional last-minute disappointments by carrying out the activity, obtaining a substitute leader, or planning with the group or individual child for an alternate project. There is need to be firm with volunteers about their responsibilities; and their interests must not be allowed to interfere with the children's enjoyment or impose a schedule to which the children show little response.

A volunteer should have the cooperation of all workers and if the service is to mean anything, it should be taken seriously by the institution. After arrangements are made, the supplies which the institution has agreed to furnish should be on hand and the children should be available when the volunteer arrives. Nothing will discourage one more than to find that half of the group are not free at the scheduled time, or that there are no materials to work with. Houseparents frequently need help in understanding and accepting the role of volunteers.

A periodic evaluation of a volunteer's work should be made. It serves as an incentive to the volunteer, and gives the superintendent an opportunity to express appreciation and to make appropriate suggestions.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

As in any other field, it is important for institution staff to keep up-to-date and to look for new ideas and enthusiasms. Whether they are responsible for the entire recreation program or only a part of it, all staff workers should have the opportunity of visiting other homes, attending conferences and institutes, taking special courses, conferring with specialists, and consulting reference material.

Many books, pamphlets, and magazines are available now for staff who are interested in the philosophy of play and recreation, in specific games or activities, or in general program planning. Several of these which are inexpensive and easy to carry have been listed at the end of each chapter.

There are many opportunities now for houseparents and other institution staff to take courses, attend meetings, and participate in institutes. National and state conferences are planning special sessions for personnel from children's institutions, and some colleges are offering training for this particular group.

The New York State Department of Social Welfare offers the services of a group-care consultant to child-caring institutions for consultation, in-service training, institutes, and conferences on all aspects of the out-of-school program. This service is available without charge through the department's area offices.

The National Recreation Association, 8 West 8 Street, New York 11, New York, has a field service of specialists who are available for institutes or training courses in social recreation, arts and crafts, and other recreation activities.

The Play Schools Association, 41 West 57 Street, New York 19, New York, also has a service which is available to child-caring institu-

tions for assistance, training, and demonstration in setting up a play program.

Both of these organizations will be glad to give information about fees, schedules, availability of staff, and other matters upon request. Both are very willing to adapt their services to the needs of the institution or group of institutions engaging them.

Schools which are now conducting special courses or institutes for houseparents include:

New York School of Social Work, 2 East 91 Street, New York 28, N. Y.

St. Louis University, School of Social Work, St. Louis, Mo.

University of North Carolina, School of Social Work, Chapel Hill, N. C.

Western Reserve University, School of Social Work, Cleveland, Ohio

For these courses the only eligibility requirement is that one be employed in a children's institution.

Schools in New York State offering special courses in recreation, physical education, and group work leading to a degree include:

New York University, School of Education, Washington Square, New York 3, N. Y.

Cortland State Teachers College, Cortland, N. Y.

University of Buffalo, School of Social Work, Buffalo, N. Y.

Fordham University, School of Social Service, 134 East 39 Street, New York 16, N. Y.

New York School of Social Work, 2 East 91 Street, New York 28, N. Y.

Many fine 16 millimeter sound films, in color and in black and white, are to be had for in-service training for staff if a good leader is available for presentation and discussion. New York State departments maintain film libraries from which films can be borrowed without charge, except for return postage. Send for catalogues to the film libraries of:

State Youth Commission, 66 Beaver St., Albany, N. Y.

State Department of Commerce, 40 Howard St., Albany, N. Y.

State Department of Health, 84 Holland Ave., Albany, N. Y.

State Department of Mental Hygiene, 217 Lark St., Albany, N. Y.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

- Child Welfare League, *Who Does What in a Children's Institution*. New York: 345 East 46 St. 1953. \$.40
- Musselman, Virginia, *The Playground Leader*. New York: National Recreation Association, 8 West 8 St. 1952. \$.50
- National Recreation Association, *Leadership Evaluation*. New York: 8 West 8 St. \$.25

PERIODICALS

- Child Study Association, *Child Study*. New York: 132 East 74 St. \$2.50 annually
- Child Welfare League of America, *Child Welfare Magazine*. New York: 345 East 46 St. \$3.00 annually
- National Conference of Catholic Charities, *Catholic Charities Review*. Washington, D. C.: 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W. \$1.00 annually
- U. S. Children's Bureau, *Children*. Washington, D. C.: \$1.25 annually

BOOKS

- Sister Mary Charles Keane, *The Housemother, a Member of the Institutional Team*. Washington, D. C.: National Conference of Catholic Charities. 1954. \$3.50

ACTIVITIES



CHAPTER X

ACTIVITIES

Regardless of the activity, there are certain preparations and techniques necessary if the children are to be free to enjoy themselves and if the leader is to be comfortable.

For certain games, sports, and activities, special supplies or equipment may be necessary and space may need to be set up properly. These should be ready before the group assembles, so the participants will not get lost in a last-minute flurry of hunting for things and so there will be no discouragement because of undue delay in starting. Balls, bats, bases, gloves, and everything else needed for a ball game should be available readily, so a minimum of time will be spent in getting them and the game can begin immediately.

Craft materials should be on hand and immediately ready for use. Jars, newspapers, cloths, and water should be available for cleaning up after messy work. Paint, brushes, paper, clips or tacks, scissors, turpentine, shellac, and paste will be needed and should be on hand for a group that is to make a poster or mural. For music, the record player should be in perfect working order and have the proper needle and speed, and the records desired should be ready and playable.

If instructions are to be given for any of these activities, the youngsters should be seated comfortably, regardless of how informally. The leader should make the instruction or discussion clear and short, taking care of individual problems after the general activity has gotten under

way. If, during the activity, there is need for further general discussion, the group should be brought together and seated comfortably so everyone will be giving attention. In this way, only a short time need be spent in helping all concerned to understand the problem and the ways of solving it.

Children are interested in *doing* and are frequently impatient with the necessity for rules or instructions, so when these are needed the briefer they can be the better the response from the children will be. Many potentially good activities have bogged down because the children complain with good reason that they never *do* anything.

GAMES

When introducing a new game, know how to play it yourself and enjoy playing it. If the group requests a game with which you are not familiar, admit that you do not know it and ask one of the players to teach the game. This is an excellent way to add to your own repertoire.

Circle or low organized group games can be made more lively and interesting if some of the following procedures are observed:

Place yourself, or the child teaching the game, in a position visible to everyone. Never direct a game from the center of the group, for your back will be to some players.

State the name of a new game and make explanations clearly, briefly, and to the point. Assuming that no one knows how to play it, demonstrate the game before playing it.

Teach one game at a time. After the basic game is learned, use variations to add interest. Observe closely to see that everyone is taking part and enjoying the game.

Stop a game at the crest of interest, not after it has waned.

Teach games that the children can play under their own leadership. Look for leaders in the group who can carry on for you.

Do not shout. Use a whistle as little as possible. When you do, make it effective. Generally, a whistle should not be used except when required by the game or at the waterfront.

Adjust the game to the time of day. Just before and after meals and in the warm midafternoon is the time for quiet games.

TOURNAMENTS AND CONTESTS

Tournaments and contests are a popular feature of recreation programs. While it is true that they can be overdone, an occasional test of skill or wits is a stimulating experience for participants and spectators.

Contests, planned well in advance and carefully interspersed through the season's program, will give the children something to look forward to, and a very special reason for striving for perfection. Various types of tournaments should be included in the program to give children with different interests and abilities the opportunity to participate. The children who do not excel in athletics, for example, may find their chance of being a victor in a storytelling contest, a musical competition, or a handcraft show.

There are various ways of holding competitions, some better suited to one type of activity than to another. The most popular types are:

THE GENERAL CONTEST: This is open to all, the best contribution being selected by a group of judges who have been appointed at the very beginning and whose decisions are unbiased and final. This is the type of contest for essay and poetry writing, harmonica playing, and public speaking.

THE SELF-TESTING TYPE: In this the individual participates alone, trying to surpass his own record or that set by someone else, or to attain a certain standard. Examples are athletic badge tests, rope skipping or bounce-ball skills, and typing for speed.

POPULAR APPLAUSE: Contests in which the winners are chosen by popular applause or ballot appeal to children. This method can be used in dance contests, decisions at "amateur night" performance, selections of the "best sport," and so forth.

ROUND ROBIN: In round robin, each team plays every other team once. It is as nearly mistake-proof as any plan can be for sports competition. All schedules are made for an even number of teams. If the number of teams is odd, simply add one to make the number even. Then take the highest number, and every time a team is scheduled against that particular number it has the "bye" and does not play that game.

CONSOLATION: The losers may play out a consolation tournament. Thus the disappointment of losing a game is minimized and the tournament is prolonged and enlarged. This type of tournament is well adapted to competitive games, quiet games, team games, and certain apparatus and athletic events.

LADDER TOURNAMENTS: In these contests the entrants' names are arranged like the rungs of a ladder, one above the other on tags or hooks. A player may challenge the player one or two places above him. If he

wins, he changes places with the player he challenged; if he loses, he remains where he is. In the top three to five places, the challenger can challenge only the player immediately above him, for at the top of the ladder competition is close and keen.

In setting up the ladder, names may be drawn from a hat or the better players' names placed near the bottom to make the tournament move rapidly and interestingly. After a designated period of preliminary play, the top three may be declared winners of the first, second, and third places. Many variations are possible for sustaining interest and for encouraging those on the lower rungs.

PLAY DAYS

The Play Day is an interesting novelty in athletics. It is a day when children from several cottages, institutions, or units meet and play *with* rather than *against* each other. At registration each child is given a colored arm band. His companions may receive other colors. Competition is carried on with one color team against another. This is a splendid means for breaking down rivalries and ill feeling that may have been built up by former competitions, and it promotes friendliness among strangers who are teammates for the time being.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

There are few activities which permit freer play of individual talents, originality, and resourcefulness than handcraft. Handcraft should never be merely "busy work." It has definite and fundamental values in providing opportunity for personality development through achievement and the acquisition of skills.

Since handcraft is so rich in its personal satisfactions and is one of the activities in which a child can work individually at his own rate of speed, it deserves a prominent place in the recreation program of children's institutions.

In one home the girls spend an entire year working on articles to sell at the annual fair. They labor over lovely embroidery and crocheting, producing beautiful work. Much of their time, however, is spent on tea towels, table runners, and similar articles made from cheap materials which do not warrant the sewing and handwork applied. The chief error in such planning is that the girls get little personal satisfaction from the handcraft. There is no opportunity for original work, as the articles and patterns are standardized, and the money realized from one

year's sale is turned back to be spent in buying materials for more pattern work for the next year's fair.

How much more satisfying is the plan of another home where the girls make some things for sale but also make gay mats and napkins for use on their own tables, covers for chair backs, draperies and pictures for clubrooms, and even candlewick spreads for the dormitories! Children who are too small to do the actual sewing, pull the basting threads, trace patterns for appliqued work, mount pictures, and help in the general planning. Seeing and using the articles they have made and designed themselves give the girls a feeling of achievement and spur them on to higher standards and genuinely creative efforts.

Children enjoy making things for themselves, their home, and their friends, so do not neglect personal satisfactions when evaluating projects. Select crafts that will really appeal to the children, and, where there is a choice, let them work with attractive and colorful materials. "It's much more fun to make a red pocketbook than a black petticoat!" Finally, show a real interest in the children's work. Their participation is much more spirited if the adult leader gives encouragement and guidance, or, better still, engages in some project of his own.

"Making things" can be effectively correlated with other parts of the institution program. The best type of arts and crafts integration is secured when the handwork is carried on as a part of a group program rather than as a special activity. Plays, pageants, festivals, parties, and other activities have handcraft possibilities. The children can make toys and games for themselves or the institution, articles for home decoration, gifts for friends and family, jewelry, belts, and other things that they can use, wear, or give away.

The fun of creating something is greater when it has a definite purpose or an immediate use. Craft activities become very much alive and worth-while if they are based on the interests of the participants. Knitting, crocheting, and weaving can be useful accomplishments and life-long pleasures.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS: Aside from a real interest in crafts on the part of the leader, the essential requirements for a handcraft program are: working materials, equipment and tools, storage space for supplies, and shelves for source books. A workshop is a great asset but is not absolutely necessary. Certain types of crafts can be carried on in the playroom, the living room, the dormitories, or on the playground.

Even when the institution boasts a special workshop, some projects should be included on which the children can work in the "in-between"

minutes. While it may be necessary to schedule regular hours for the use of the workshop, additional time should be set aside for those children who want to continue or finish special projects.

One institution has a supervised shop which is open every afternoon after school. Each cottage or group has a certain day for shop, but other individuals may come as they wish. There is also a free afternoon during which children may come in for extra work. All types of craft work are carried on. The many articles in various stages of development are left in full view, giving the workshop the air of being greatly used and stimulating the children's interest in each other's work and encouraging them to attempt new projects.

Another home has a "Tinker Shop" in which boys and girls are helped in their efforts to make something "to keep." Jointed toys, square-knotted belts, pocketbooks, and simple bookends are a few of the articles made in this interesting place.

MATERIALS: Because of lack of funds, many institutions have to limit their craft supplies and equipment to those items which cost very little, can be salvaged from materials discarded by the institution, or are donated by interested individuals and organizations.

The same standards should be expected in products made from new or discarded materials. Discarded materials are no excuse for slovenly craftsmanship or poor design and choice of color. Nor are they an excuse for mere "busy work" programs and the making of articles of little value and usefulness. Handcraft projects can be inexpensive and yet possess high standards of color, design, craftsmanship, and usefulness. Such materials as paper, wooden boxes, tin cans, scraps of cloth, and other things can be converted into a variety of useful and attractive articles.

PROJECTS: There are few hard and fast rules which must be followed in any handcraft project. In fact, the amateur craftsman is encouraged to experiment, for experimentation will lead him into interesting variations. Minor mishaps will undoubtedly occur along the way, but the experience gained is all the more valuable. A few errors and some waste in a group of amateurs working up their own ideas according to their own judgment are much more desirable than a series of beautifully uniform products made strictly according to patterns which allow not the slightest originality on the part of the craftsmen.

Block printing, jewelry making, shell work, greeting card design, weaving, party favors, invitations, decoration—all lend themselves to this type of experimental, creative work.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

All of the following pamphlets are published by the National Recreation Association, 8 West 8 St., New York, N. Y.:

- Active Games for the Live Wires.* \$.50
- Arts and Crafts for the Recreation Leader.* \$1.50
- Christmas Crafts and Decorations.* \$.65
- 88 Successful Play Activities.* \$.60
- Games for Boys and Men.* \$1.25
- Games for Children.* \$.50
- Games for Quiet Hours and Small Spaces.* \$.50
- Games for the Christmas Season.* \$.65
- How to Do It.* \$1.00
- Stunts, Contests, Relays.* \$.15
- Twice 55 Games with Music.* \$.50

Many additional books, pamphlets, and bulletins are available for games, play activities, and handcraft from the National Recreation Association and other sources.



CHAPTER XI

PARTIES

PLANNING THE PARTY: Leadership techniques and careful programming are the two most important ingredients of a successful party. The plans need not be involved or complicated, but they must be based upon such considerations as age of guests, size of group, and whether the party is to be corecreational or segregated.

Everybody likes to help in planning a party, especially children and young people. Make the party theirs from start to finish by letting them serve on committees and assist in planning for it.

Unusual invitations, game adaptations, distinctive decorations, and appropriate refreshments can be combined around any theme chosen. Written invitations should be used whenever practical. The prospective guests will be pleased by this individual attention and will have an opportunity to learn the proper method of responding.

When possible, allow those in the institution to invite outsiders to some parties during the year, thus making these occasions very special ones and doubly enjoyable.

In choosing games, it is wise to include a variety of activities, but concentrate on those that will find the greatest response in the group. Select enough games to keep guests busy every moment at the party, and then prepare several extra activities for emergency use.

Have plenty of variety in the program, balancing it with active games, quiet games, music, and stunts. Adapt the games to the party theme, if there is one. Decorations, even if they consist only of a few festive touches, make an important contribution to party atmosphere. Let the children plan, make, and arrange the decorations.

As a rule, refreshments should be kept simple. Individual themes will suggest appropriate refreshments. The idea of a circus party, for example, implies refreshments of "pink lemonade" and popcorn. And what would Halloween be without cider and shiny red apples? If more elaborate refreshments are served and the guests gather around a table, a centerpiece or some other form of table decoration should be planned.

Placecards and party favors, such as hats, boutonnieres, and other novelties which the children have made, add to the gaiety and give the party guests something to take home. The making of these favors can be correlated easily and effectively with the arts-and-crafts activities of the institution.

CONDUCTING THE PARTY: Have all materials and equipment ready and on hand before the guests arrive. Be sure that paper and pencils are available and that music of some kind is ready—the piano is unlocked and music is on hand, and the record player is in working condition and appropriate records are ready for use.

At a party everyone should have a good time, and it is up to the leader to see that everyone does.

Do not make the program too long, and stop on time. If the party is in the evening, it is advisable to have singing, dramatics, or some other quiet activity at the close. Never let a party "peter out."

DRAMATICS

There is no greater proof of the need for all the various forms of drama in child life than the eagerness with which children receive dramatic activities. The presentation of a play or some other dramatic production should not be an unusual and infrequent occurrence in the institution.

A wise leader will not plunge directly into a lengthy and difficult production. Dramatics should be introduced into the institution pro-

gram through the simplest activities—charades, pantomimes, tableaux—leading into the short skit, the dramatic sketch, and the shadow play. From these it is a short step to the one-act play, and then, if desired, to the more lengthy and complex production.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES: Any of the following activities might be included in the institution program:

Charades	Masquerades	Tableaux
Circus	Movie making	Shadow plays
Costume making	One-act plays	Stage craft
Festivals	Pageants	Story dramatization
Informal	Pantomimes	Storytelling
dramatization	Play reading	Vaudeville acts
Marionettes	Puppetry	Water pageants

STORYTELLING

“Tell us a story” is a common plea wherever children are gathered. Housemothers, club leaders, school teachers, and parents are all called on to meet the never-ending demand for stories and more stories.

HINTS FOR THE STORYTELLER: The age of the listeners is a highly important factor in choosing a tale for the story hour, but individual boys and girls differ so much that it is not possible to say that one group of stories will appeal to all children of one age. Ideally, stories should start with the child’s own experience and immediate environment and proceed gradually to other children, other things, and eventually cover a wide scope.

Perhaps the best stories to start with are the picture-book stories so popular with younger children. The book will help focus the children’s attention and will give you time to acquire confidence in yourself as a storyteller. Leave the book on a shelf or table so that the children can pick it up afterwards.

SELECTING THE STORIES: In choosing stories, select short ones first. Be sure that they are tellable, that is, that they have an interesting and a direct beginning, a quick sequence of events which are closely related to each other, and familiar characters or images which have definite suspense or some degree of mystery, such as the pumpkin which was changed into a golden coach in the story of Cinderella. Stories for telling should also have marked repetition to carry along the thread of the story and make it easy for the listeners to follow, as well as a de-

cided, convincing climax, followed quickly by a clean-cut ending. Classical examples of stories which fit these requirements are The Gingerbread Boy, Three Little Pigs, The Shoemaker and the Elves, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Although children like stories they have never heard before, they never tire of hearing their favorites over and over again. In your first storytelling efforts, therefore, rely on the tested stories which are so tellable that they can't fail.

PUPPETRY

The materials for making all types of puppets, as well as the stage and scenery, are to be had at almost no cost. Bits of cloth make effective costumes; lengths of yarn make hair. Wooden and cardboard boxes, tools, paints, cotton, and all kinds of odds and ends are a few things used by the puppeteer.

Puppetry affords a number of interesting and fascinating ways in which children can express themselves. The concealment of the puppeteer and the complete identification of the manipulator with the puppet character will provide a means by which children may overcome shyness and develop poise.

Since puppetry offers such varied possibilities—something for every budget and for every degree of skill—it can be highly recommended for institutions. Even these boys who consider other forms of dramatics “sissy” are among the most ardent puppeteers.

PAGEANTS AND FESTIVALS

Pageants and festivals provide opportunities for the participation of a large number of children, making use of the abilities and talents developed through the institution activities program.

The pageant can be original, unusual, and effective, but its success depends to a large extent on careful and thorough organization. A folk festival, for example, would be based upon the picturesque customs, folklore, and music of other lands. The Pied Piper theme is another possibility, and the circus theme, of course, is one particularly enjoyed by children.

MUSIC

Whether it is a gay song of childhood, a rousing football tune, a stirring march, a joyous Christmas carol, or a reverent anthem, the singing and playing of good music is a rich experience. No other activity has the power of music in expressing feelings and in making for

group spirit. One of the most convenient sources of music in an institution is a good record player with all types of recordings. A portable, covered machine is economical and practical.

SINGING: There are many occasions for bringing music into the children's home. One of the great advantages of singing is that it requires no special planning or equipment. The major essentials are time and the right spirit.

One of the simplest forms of music is group singing, informal, and just for the fun of it. Singing around the piano, before a blazing fireplace, or under a favorite tree can be a most pleasant and fruitful experience.

Too many adults do not sing with children because, in their own opinion, they do not sing well. There is nothing lovelier than a natural, unaffected voice, and the best voice-teachers agree that almost anyone can learn to carry a tune and to sing it pleasantly. So put qualms aside and learn tunes by playing them on the piano or listening to them on the radio, victrola or TV. Then sing them simply and naturally, but with spirit, and the group will catch your enthusiasm. Traditional folk songs and ballads should be interspersed with popular songs. This will contribute variety and will enrich the musical knowledge of the children.

MUSIC APPRECIATION: Music appreciation can be fostered through listening to music, through participating in music memory contests, and through making scrapbooks. The legends upon which some of the musical masterpieces are based, the stories behind holiday and folk songs, and the lives of composers make fascinating telling and are of infinite value in teaching the appreciation of music.

In some schools, small children are told to "do what the music says," and they skip, hop, run, or march as the music directs. This interpretation of music is excellent for self-expression even with older children.

DANCING

The ability to dance well is one of the recognized social graces. Teaching young people to dance properly saves them later embarrassment and gives them good standards of performance. Since social dancing is, without doubt, the most popular of all co-recreational activities for young people, institutions would be rendering great service to their older boys and girls if they would include the teaching of dancing in their recreation programs.

Instruction need not be limited to couple-dancing. The singing and musical folk dances of our own and other lands are a great deal more social than couple dances and, when conducted well, are usually more fun. They can be recommended for all groups, young and old, and they should have a very special place in institutions. Square dancing can be fun and usually becomes very popular with teenagers after they learn the fundamentals.

During the course of a social dancing class, leaders have an excellent opportunity to teach lessons in social etiquette. When given, such lessons should be informal and should arise naturally from the dancing situation. Simply as a part of the evening's instructions, boys should be told how to ask a girl for a dance, how to escort her from the floor, and what to say to her and what she should reply when he leaves her. Both boys and girls like to know what to wear to dances; when it is proper for the girls to wear long dresses, or when boys may remove their jackets. In community centers where instructions have been given in this way, they have always been received with great enthusiasm.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

All of the following pamphlets are published by the National Recreation Association, 8 West 8 St., New York, N. Y.:

Dances and Their Management. \$.15

Inexpensive Costumes for Plays, Festivals and Pageants. \$.25

Informal Dramatics. \$.50

Mixers to Music for Parties and Dances. \$.65

Parties—A to Z. \$.75

Parties—Plans and Programs. \$.75

Parties—Special Days of the Year. \$.50

Roads to Music Appreciation. \$.35

Simple Puppetry. \$.50

Singing Games. \$.50

Storytelling. \$.50

Suggestions for an Amateur Circus. \$.35



CHAPTER XII

NATURE RECREATION

Luther Burbank, in his little treatise, *The Training of the Human Plant*, says: "Every child should have mud pies, grasshoppers, water-bugs, tadpoles, frogs, mudturtles, elderberries, wild strawberries, acorns, chestnuts, trees to climb, brooks to wade in, water lilies, woodchucks, bats, bees, butterflies, various animals to pet, hayfields, pine cones, rocks to roll, sand, snakes, huckleberries, and hornets, and any child who has been deprived of these has been deprived of the best part of his education." Some institutions can provide all these things, and others try, under severe limitations, to offer the best substitutes possible.

A nature program can start in the backyard, or with a walk around the block, stopping at the pet shop, the fish market, the florist's, or at someone's vegetable patch. Special excursions to the museum, the zoo, the bird sanctuary, and the planetarium come in for their share of attention, but nature observations and projects need not be limited to these occasional jaunts. They can occur whenever the opportunity presents itself and quite frequently are the natural companions of other activities. For example, cameras or sketching kits can be taken on hikes to record the high spots of the occasion; scavenger hunts or treasure hunts can be conducted for the express purpose of securing collections for a nature corner at home; prints and casts can be made of the most

interesting items; and plants can be put into dish and water gardens, or window-boxes and posey patches. We can include star walks and talks, cook-outs, songs and stories, nature games to test powers of observation, and finally, pets—large and small—to care for. These are only a few of the many ways in which nature study can be made a vital experience for children. Just calling attention to changes in the sky, the wind, and neighborhood trees and flowers is a good springboard from which to start.

NATURE MUSEUM

Capitalizing on the interest of the small boy or girl in collecting things, one can make a nature museum a fascinating “corner” in the institution, provided that it is actively used and not left to become just a repository for exhibits. Children learn much through their uncontrollable desire to feel and touch. Some nature objects will not bear handling, but children will respect that fact if the “hands off” rule does not apply to everything in sight.

Among the items which might be included in a collection are: mounted leaves and flowers found in the neighborhood, posters showing the value of conservation, a display of handcraft articles in which natural materials are used, shells, cocoons, rocks, butterflies, abandoned birds’ nests, a terrarium or aquarium, a star chart, a calendar on which a record of the weather is kept each day, and a tray of seedlings germinated under various conditions of light, heat, soils, and moisture.

PETS

Every child should have a pet of his own or one to share. Pets give a child something to love and very often the feeling of being loved. There are other reasons for pets. They help to soften hard feelings and to heal wounded ones; to teach kindness, generosity, loyalty, and unselfishness. By their own actions pets emphasize some of the most important rules of life. The pets in a children’s home may range from guppies and tropical fish to ponies, but the most usual and the most popular are dogs, cats, rabbits, ducks, and birds.

GARDENS

In many institutions each child has his own garden; in others there is a “community” one for each department or cottage. Still others follow the plan of a central garden to be worked by all the children. In this last plan gardening is usually looked upon as a chore. The second

scheme can be interesting and enjoyable but depends to a great extent upon the encouragement and enthusiasm of the adult in charge of the group. The first plan—that of having individual gardens—is the more satisfactory from the child's point of view and brings the best results in human values.

INDIVIDUAL GARDENS

Give a child a favorable spot for his garden. Tools will be better appreciated and cared for if they are attractive, easy to handle, sturdy and the child's very own.

The youngest gardeners should be given plants to set out from which they can pick blooms immediately. Little children become discouraged waiting for seeds to sprout. For them, pansies, baby breath, and forget-me-nots are real favorites.

Older children will also want things to happen quickly, even though they have more patience than the little ones. For this reason vegetables are especially recommended. Radishes which can be brought in to one's own table; leaf lettuce which can be fed to the pet rabbit or made into good sandwiches; and beets, swiss chard, and carrots (which can be sold to the cook, perhaps), require a minimum time for growth. To these can be added onions, tomatoes, and turnips.

The youngsters will want flowers, too, therefore fast-growing ones should be chosen. Among those which can be especially recommended are nasturtiums, which will thrive even in poor soil; bachelor buttons, poppies, morning-glories, petunias, zinnias, marigolds, cosmos, and sunflowers—in the order named. Flowering tobacco, ageratum, straw flowers, phlox, and Chinese forget-me-nots are also sure to please young enthusiasts.

INDOOR GARDENS

Dish gardens, terraria, and the growing of vines from simple plants or seeds will help beautify the home and at the same time amuse and educate the children.

PLANTS AND VINES: Grapefruit or orange seeds in a little pot of soil produce a plant with shiny green leaves which is excellent for a centerpiece. Half of a sweet potato placed in a jar of water so that half remains out of water grows a pretty vine. Corn, beans, and other little vegetable seeds can be grown in peanut shells or egg shells.

DISH GARDENS: Dish gardens can be made in deep platters, flat flower bowls, and pottery dishes of various sizes, usually from three to five

inches deep. Old roasting pans, shallow boxes or pie tins painted black or green to prevent rust and warping, are also good. In making a dish garden, first put a layer of fine gravel on the bottom of the container for drainage, and on the top of that a layer of charcoal. The charcoal also helps drainage and acts as a deodorant. It may be purchased at seed houses, but charcoal from the fireplace, stove, or burned for the purpose in the backyard, is satisfactory. Cover the charcoal with a few inches of rich earth, preferably from the place where you obtained the plants. Model the soil to make hills and valleys to fit the theme you have chosen for the garden.

Plant sparingly and with an eye for simplicity, balance, and design. Use odd stones, small mossy twigs, and shells to add to the natural appearance of the garden. Birdseed and grass seed are effective for meadow scenes. Burned coke makes an excellent substitute for volcanic rock. Matches and small twigs may be made into fences and log cabins. Figurines of all kinds, from wood nymphs to barnyard animals, can be placed in the garden. Ponds may be made by sinking saucers or jar tops and filling them with water, by submerging a mirror, by using cement, or by building the garden part on rocks and filling the container partly full of water. Pebbles and tiny water plants may be added to the pond. One important thing to remember in making the dish garden is to use plants which require the same type of soil.

TERRARIA: Because of the delicacy of fine ferns and mosses, they actually do better in terraria than in open dish gardens. When combined with tiny wintergreen and partridge berry plants, with their glowing red berries a moss-and-fern garden presents a beautiful color contrast. Such a garden is especially refreshing to have around during the winter months.

A terrarium is simply a water-tight container with a glass top and glass sides for visibility. The principles of making the garden are the same as for dish gardens. Place a half inch to two inches of gravel or brown sand on the bottom of the container and on the gravel a thin layer of charcoal. Next add good garden soil, preferably leaf-mold and peat moss, building it up or landscaping it into hills and valleys. Moss, placed with its green side against the glass, may be used to line the bottom and sides of the container to keep the dirt, charcoal, and gravel from showing through.

Water the garden with a spray-bulb, watering pot, or dipper. Keep on the glass cover to prevent evaporation and to maintain a more even temperature. The garden will need watering only once every month or

two because of the condensation within the container. The top should fit loosely to let in air and may be opened for a few minutes each day. Keep the terrarium in a light place, but not in direct sunlight nor in a very warm spot. A northern exposure is best.

As in dish gardens, avoid hit-and-miss collections of plants. Group those which grow together in bogs, in woods, in meadows, along roadsides, or by the seashore.

THE LEADER'S ROLE

The superintendent or houseparent who says "Every child may have a garden" and stops there should not be surprised by the lack of interest. As in all other activities, children need warm-hearted encouragement. Once the gardens have been started, the sponsor must show patience and sympathy, give advice that is carefully phrased and timed, plenty of praise, and actual help over the hard parts. Last but not least, the sponsor must show genuine appreciation and a real sense of humor. When a child makes a bouquet in which one half of the flowers fairly "swear" at the others, remember the thought behind it and give the bouquet the same prominence which would be given to one of one's own arranging. When a child tastes a green radish and exclaims "It bites my tongue," do not reprove his impatience in pulling it up before it has ripened, but admit instead that he has given a good description.

CAMPING

Cooking out in the open, sleeping under the stars, hiking through the woods, singing around the campfire, and the many other never-to-be-forgotten experiences which come with camping, should be available to every boy and girl.

Many institutions have been providing camp experiences in various ways. Some send their children to organization or private camps. Many State parks are available for overnight, weekend, or longer vacation groups. Plans to use these and reservations must be made well in advance. Several institutions have camps of their own to which the whole family moves for the entire season. While at the summer place, the program is planned to provide a complete change from the winter routine.

When it is not possible to leave the regular institution residence, an entirely different program, having all the elements of camping, can be arranged. A good day-camp program at home can be very satisfying. In one institution the "campers" lived, played, and slept in the

backyards of their cottages where tents had been put up. On rainy days the campers cooked in the cottage basements and used the indoor play-rooms. The plan was carried on until it was possible to establish a real camp outside the city.

To give the program a real impetus at another home, an entirely new staff was taken on for the summer work. This gave the regular staff members a long vacation and the opportunity to study, to rest, or to visit other institutions. The summer leaders gave a renewed freshness and spontaneity to the program. As the plan worked out, it was mutually helpful to the spirits of both children and adults. However, careful planning should go into such an arrangement to insure a good experience for the children. Summer staff should have pre-season orientation for institution living and should be prepared for a busy season of hard work. Even though it will be satisfying and enjoyable, such an assignment should not be considered as a vacation.

Still another plan is that of having a small camping site to which the children go in small groups for short periods ranging from overnight to a week. If a State or national park is within a reasonable distance, it will probably offer more fun, interest, comfort, and safety than most places chosen independently.

CONSIDERATIONS IN ORGANIZING A CAMP PROGRAM

No matter where the camp is located, there are a few principles which must be considered in planning the program if it is to be successful.

As much care should be taken in planning for the camp program as for any other phase of the children's life in the institution. The camp site should be well chosen, safe, and comfortable. All equipment should be appropriate, sturdy, and in good repair. The program director, whether the all-year-round person or not, should have experience in camping and should understand the need the children have for individualized activity and a feeling of freedom and relaxation. Counselors or group leaders should be carefully chosen, and when houseparents take on camp responsibilities it should be because they can enjoy and contribute to camp life.

The program should provide a complete change from winter activities, with emphasis on health and good times rather than on formal education. It should be built upon out-of-door life and should include nature study, woodcraft, hiking, water sports, and campfires. Although some organization of program is necessary, it should not be so full that

there is no time for relaxation and free play. In the winter months the children must follow a fairly rigid routine. During the vacation period they should have more time for reading, for exploring, for imaginative play, for daydreaming, and for all the other things which help a person develop his inner resources and find himself. A common fault of a large number of present-day camps, many people feel, is overorganization. A certain amount of scheduling is necessary, but there should be plenty of time for children to choose their own activities. Some boys and girls have difficulty handling the new freedom from routine. Its strangeness confuses them and they get restless or just dawdle away their time. Even that may be a good experience for a child to have. When it approaches the state of aimless timewasting or boredom, however, the wise leader should skillfully lead a child to new avenues of fun and activity. Informal conversations with the child will soon point the directions of his interests.

It should be remembered that not all children like camp, and some institution children may react unfavorably to the additional change when sent to camp. Most children will enjoy and profit by a camping experience but care should be taken to consider the needs of the occasional insecure or shy child who would develop best by remaining in familiar surroundings with children and staff he knows. The casework planning for a child should be given full consideration when planning the summer program.

SUGGESTED READING

PAMPHLETS

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